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THE

DISCOVERY

OF THE

NORTH-WEST PASSAGE

BY

H.M.S. "INVESTIGATOR," CAPT. R. M'CLURE,

1850, 1851, 1852, 1853, 1854.

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EDITED BY

COMMANDER SHERARD OSBORN,

AUTHOR OF "STRAY LEAVES FROM AN ARCTIC JOURNAL."

FROM THE LOGS AND JOURNALS OF CAPT. ROBERT LE M. M'CLURE.

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ILLUSTRATED BY COMMANDER S. GURNEY CRESSWELL, R.N.

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TO

THE RIGHT HONOURABLE THE

LORDS COMMISSIONERS OF THE ADMIRALTY,

These Pages,

DESCRIPTIVE OF THE VOYAGE OF HER MAJESTY'S DISCOVERY SHIP

"INVESTIGATOR,"

WHILE IN SEARCH OF THE EXPEDITION UNDER CAPT. SIR JOHN FRANKLIN, R.N. K.C.H.,

AND OF THE DISCOVERY OF THE NORTH-WEST PASSAGE BY

CAPTAIN ROBERT LE MESURIER M'CLURE, R.N.,

ARE, WITH THEIR LORDSHIPS' PERMISSION,

Respectfully Inscribed

BY THEIR LORDSHIPS' MOST OBEDIENT AND HUMBLE SERVANT,

SHERARD OSBORN,

LATE COMMANDER OF H.M.S.V. "PIONEER."

PREFACE.

THE annals of Arctic History afford so many noble illustrations of the spirit of enterprise and hardihood of our sailors, that in this point of view alone they can, it is to be hoped, never fail to interest the British people. It is easy to attempt to cast ridicule on any generous impulse of a nation or an individual, by speaking of it as Quixotic, foolhardy, and so forth; but if it be a weakness in English seamen, that for three centuries they have sought to win honour and renown in regions where the ordinary hardships of those whose business is upon the great waters are multiplied a hundredfold, it will assuredly be no joyous day for England, when her sailors shall be free from the charge of any such chivalrous extravagance.

Sir John Franklin and his hundred and thirty-

eight gallant followers, went forth to achieve the North-west Passage. They discovered it, and perished victims to their zeal; and then came one worthy to follow in their footsteps—Captain Sir Robert Le Mesurier M'Clure! He came, indeed, too late to save Franklin; but at least he completed the search for him on one given line, by passing from ocean to ocean, and he secured to the Royal Navy and to Great Britain the imperishable renown of having successfully accomplished the enterprise so long attempted in vain.

The Editor feels that in the following narrative, he has scarcely done justice to the many noble qualities of every individual forming the gallant company of the "Investigator"; but he has at any rate endeavoured to place on record some feeble acknowledgment of their heroic courage and self-devotion.

The delay in the production of this work has arisen from the Editor having been obliged to leave England upon active service; and the many calls upon his time and attention have rendered perhaps still more imperfect the naturally unpolished style

of a sailor's narrative. But into the truth of that narrative the Editor challenges the closest investigation, for his ambition is that the work may remain as the history of a great event in naval chronicles, and perhaps awaken in the breasts of future Franklins, Parrys, or M'Clures that love for perilous adventure, which must ever form a most valuable trait in the character of a maritime people.

The Editor has not indulged in wholesale praise, for it was no part of his task to write up every man as a hero who sailed into the Arctic Seas, and out again. Indiscriminate commendation is loathsome to all rightminded men; and it would be poor reward indeed to those whose tale of suffering and gallantry is recounted in the following pages, to compare their successes with the failures as rife in the Arctic Seas as elsewhere.

For information on various points, and for assistance in the pleasing but anxious task of collating this narrative with various authorities, the Editor has been indebted to Captain (now Sir Robert) M'Clure, Commander Gurney Cresswell (whose

sketches enliven the letter-press), John Barrow, Esq., F.R.S., Captain Washington, Hydrographer to the Admiralty, John Hay, Esq., of the Admiralty, and other kind friends, to whom he tenders his hearty thanks.

H.M.S. "Medusa," Sea of Azov,
April, 1856.

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A List of the Officers and Crew of H.M.S. "Investigator," who performed the North-west Passage.

Name.	Rank or Rating.	Remarks.
R. J. Le M. M'Clure	Commander.	
Wm. H. Haswell -	Lieutenant.	
Samuel G. Cresswell	do.	
H. H. Sainsbury -	Mate	Died on board H.M.S. "Resolute" off Cape Cockburn, Barrow Straits, 14th Nov. 1853.
Robert Wynniatt -	do.	
Stephen Court -	Second Master.	19th April 1853, rated Acting Master.
Alex. Armstrong, M.D.	Surgeon.	
Henry Piers - -	Assistant Surgeon.	
Joseph C. Paine - -	Clerk in charge.	
George J. Ford - -	Carpenter.	
George Kennedy -	Acting Boatswain.	
Richard A. Ross -	Quarter-master.	24th Dec. 1850, diarated A.B.
John Davies - -	A.B.	15th April, 1853, rated quarter-master.
John Kerr - - -	Gunners' Mate.	Died 13th April, 1853, at Bay of Mercy, Bank's Land, on board H.M.S. "Investigator."
Henry Bluff - -	Boatswain's Mate.	
Samuel Mackenzie -	A.B.	
Charles Steel - - -	A.B.	
David Harris - -	A.B.	
Edward Fawcett - -	Boatswain's Mate.	
James Evans - - -	Caulker.	
George Gibbs - -	A.B.	
James Williams - -	Captain of the Hold.	
Peter Thompson - -	Captain of the Foretop.	
Samuel Relfe - -	A.B.	
Thomas Morgan - -	A.B.	Died on board H.M.S. "North Star," at Beechey Island, 22nd May, 1854.

List of the Officers and Crew of H.M.S. "Investigator" — continued.

Name.	Rank or Rating.	Remarks.
John Eames - -	A.B.	Died 11th April, 1853, Bay of Mercy, Banks Land, on board H.M.S. "Investigator."
William Batten -	A.B.	
Charles Anderson -	A.B.	
Isaac Stubberfield -	Ship's Cook.	
Frederick Taylor -	A.B.	
Henry Gauen - -	Carpenter's Mate.	
George Brown - -	A.B.	24th Dec. 1850, rated quarter-master.
Cornelius Hulott -	Captain's Coxswain.	
William Whitefield -	Carpenter's Crew	
Michael Flynn - -	Quarter-master.	
Mark Bradbury -	A.B.	
James Nelson - -	A.B.	
William Carrol' -	A.B.	
George Olley - -	A.B.	
John Calder - -	Captain of Forecastle.	
John Ramsay - -	A.B.	
Henry Stone - -	Blacksmith.	
Henry Sugden - -	Sub. Officers' Steward.	
Henry May - -	Quarter-master.	
Joseph Facey - -	Sailmaker.	
James M'Donald -	A.B.	
George L. Milner -	Gun-room Steward.	
John Wilcox - - -	Pay-master and Pay-master's Steward.	
Robert Tiffeny - -	Captain of Main-top.	
John Boyle - - -	A.B.	Died 6th April, 1853, Bay of Mercy; the first death. Lieut. Pim arrived next day.
Thomas Toy - - -	A.B.	
Samuel Bonnsall -	A.B.	
Ellis Griffiths - -	A.B.	
Mark Griffiths - -	A.B.	
John Keefe - - -	A.B.	
Thos. S. Carmichael -	A.B.	
John Woon - - -	Sergeant of Marines.	
J. B. Farquharson -	Corporal "	
George Parfitt - -	Private "	
Elias Bow - - -	Private "	

List of the Officers and Crew of H.M.S. "Investigator" — *continued.*

Name.	Rank or Rating.	Remarks.
James Biggs - - -	Private "	15th April 1853, rated corporal.
Thomas Bancroft -	Private "	
Thomas King - -	Private "	
James Saunders -	Private "	
Johan A. Miercking	Esquimaux Interpreter.	



THE

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CHAPTER I.

INTRODUCTION.

THE successful realisation of the project so long cherished in Great Britain, of the discovery of a way through the Arctic Ocean to the Indies—the final solution of a problem sought through many an arduous struggle during the course of three hundred years—is what it is our present duty to chronicle; and we may be permitted, in the first place, briefly to remind the reader of the reasons that made such a voyage desirable.

On looking at the surface of the globe, it will be seen at a glance that the Asiatic peninsula of

Hindostan, China, and Japan—the Ophir of the Old World—are placed, geographically speaking, with respect to Western Europe, in the most distant and inaccessible position.

Turn to an ancient atlas, and think of the "antres vast and deserts idle" that lay between India and Europe, and we can better appreciate the forays of the great Macedonian,—the difficulties he encountered, and the genius which, in mastering them, raised him to the rank of a demi-god among his countrymen. Yet Alexander left no footprints east of the Indus.

The legions of Imperial Rome failed to carry their conquering eagles to a region which they must have been fully aware contributed largely to the enormous wealth of Jerusalem, Judea, and Egypt. Even Roman ambition was checked by the difficulties of the route.

The Mahometan, more fortunate in his central position, served for ages to act as the medium of transit for the spices and products of the East to Western Europe, whither the Crusader carried back a knowledge of and taste for luxuries previously unknown,—a knowledge which created new wants, and excited the mercantile and nautical skill of nations dwelling upon the shores of the

Mediterranean. Venice and Genoa rose to greatness upon their lucrative trade with the East; and the fact soon came home to the common sense of their neighbours, and awakened the desire to supplant them, or share in their profits.

In the middle of the thirteenth century, Marco Polo brought back to Western Europe such glowing accounts of the East as verified all the traditionary tales of Cipango and Cathay. Enterprise and cupidity were aroused. The Portuguese slowly but successfully proceeded along that African shore which, as they knew, touched the East upon the Mediterranean Sea, and which they might therefore infer would eventually lead them to the prize, if they followed it in an opposite direction.

Columbus, with more genius, ascribed to the Indies a vast extent of eastern longitude; and then deduced, from certain traditionary accounts of a land lying west of Iceland (whither he had traded), that by sailing in that direction from the Isle of Fayal he would secure to the prince that should employ him possession of the Indies. Columbus sailed eventually under Spanish auspices, and discovered a land which he naturally imagined was the long-wished-for Eastern continent.

England, not less than Spain and Portugal, was excited to maritime adventure by the wonderful discovery of the new continent, then supposed to be the eastern seaboard of the long-sought Indies. These Indies in the meantime were actually reached by the Portuguese, under Vasco de Gama, by way of that Cape of Torments flatteringly named by John II. Cabo da Boa Esperáza.

Before a century had passed, however, both Spaniards and Englishmen found that a wide ocean spread between their western discovery and Cathay; and though the Spaniard could reach it by rounding the continent of America at the Straits of Magellan, yet he forbade all others the right to risk the adventure, and treated as pirates all of our countrymen who dared approach his conquests. The Portuguese in like manner monopolised the route round the African continent, and both added to the dangers that awaited the English navigator in his efforts to share the booty of the East.

John Cabot, who in the service of Henry VII. had secured for Britain a title to American discovery, left a son, Sebastian, whom Edward VI. wisely patronised. With this man seems first to have originated the idea of reaching the coveted

land by taking a north about route, and thus avoiding the dangers of the great sea voyage by either cape.

Our seamen, accustomed to the hardships and cold of northern latitudes, feared the Frigid as little or less than the Torrid Zone; and only forty years* after Nunez de Balboa waded into the sea at Panama, and striking it with his sword, claimed the broad Pacific as the property of Spain, the first English arctic expedition sailed to achieve a *north-east* passage to Cathay.

Three ships left Greenwich, under Sir Hugh Willoughby, on May 10, 1553, and were rewarded by discovering Nova Zembla and the White Sea; but the subsequent melancholy fate of the admiral and his crew, who were frozen or starved to death in Lapland, checked the national enthusiasm; and although two more attempts were made in the same direction, they were equally unsuccessful. The Dutch, like ourselves, anxious to share in the wealth of the Indies, so jealously watched by Spaniards and Portuguese, tried to reach them by a north-east route: Barentz likewise perished in gallant and unavailing attempts to carry out his

* Vasco Nunez de Balboa discovered and took possession of the Pacific Ocean in 1513.

country's wishes; and after him England made two slight efforts in the same direction under Hudson and Cherie, and then turned her attention in the opposite one. Prior to the time of Barentz's North-eastern Expedition, the first *north-west* voyage had already been attempted from Great Britain.

Martin Frobisher, a seaman of Queen Elizabeth's time, was the first to call attention to the possibility of reaching the East, Cipango, and Cathay, by passing north of America. For fifteen years he patiently urged his ideas upon the consideration of his countrymen, and at last, in 1576, in the reign of Elizabeth, he sailed to commence that work which the seamen of England only completed in 1854, or two hundred and seventy-four years afterwards, in the reign of Queen Victoria.

It is not our purpose to follow Frobisher, Davis, Hudson, and Baffin, through their adventures and discoveries. Our charts of the present day, on which the localities they discovered bear their respective names, sufficiently attest the amount of the additions they made to our geographical knowledge; but when the last-named great navigator, Baffin, returned in 1616 from the most successful of his voyages, the North-west Passage was,

as Martin Frobisher said, "a thing yet undone, whereby a notable mind might be made famous and fortunate."

Years elapsed — men's minds took another turn — times changed — the maritime supremacy of Britain gradually developed itself. If Spain could boast of her Magellan, England had had her Drake.

The tide of fortune now turned slowly in favour of our hardy race of seamen. Along the seaboard of Spanish America, whether in the Atlantic or Pacific Oceans, the English seamen slowly but steadily established their pre-eminence; and within a brief period, from the date of the first Indian cargo* being exposed in Leadenhall Market (which cargo was a prize), a footing was obtained in India, and the foundation of our Eastern Empire firmly established.

From 1632, when Captains Fox and James discovered the localities by the names of which their memories have there been preserved, a century elapsed before the attempt to discover a north-

* On the 15th of September, 1592, the first cargo of Indian produce was exposed in Leadenhall. It was captured by George Clifford, Earl of Cumberland, in the Portuguese carrack "Madre de Dios," off the Azores.

west passage to India was resumed. Even then, although a reward of 20,000*l.* was offered, the attempts of Scroggs, Dobbs, and Middleton, in 1740-41, yielded no better fruit than many of our modern ones; they produced a vast deal of writing, exaggerated accounts of difficulties, and no results of any value.

Captain Cook's success in the South Seas, and, indeed, wherever he went, led the nation to hope that he might be the man fated to secure to his country the honour of a discovery which was so much desired for commercial as well as geographical purposes. He failed, however, in entering the ice, and well was it for himself and his crew that he did so; the fate of Sir Hugh Willoughby would assuredly have befallen them, unprepared as his ships were for such a voyage, and the rigours of such a climate.

About the same time two of the servants of the Hudson's Bay Company reached the mouths of the Mackenzie and Coppermine Rivers, and sighted an arctic sea lying north of the American continent; but the eighteenth century closed and left us still far from the accomplishment of an enterprise commenced more than two hundred years before. Small results were there to be seen on the chart

for such long and patient toil, suffering, and devotion to their duty as the majority of the men engaged in this service had exhibited.

On the side of the Pacific, by Behring's Strait, the termination of our knowledge of the American continent was at Icy Cape; and on the side of the Atlantic, at Hudson's Bay. Between these two points, eighty degrees of longitude apart, the Arctic Sea had only been seen at two others, about half-way between the extremes; and almost immediately after the ratification of the General Peace of Europe in 1815, the idea of carrying into effect a design, upon which so much zeal and wealth had already been expended, was revived with great earnestness. It is evident, in the memoirs of Haines Barrington and Sir John Barrow, that at the outset they cherished the most ardent hopes of securing to their country a discovery that would be both useful and glorious.

But a Russian expedition under Kotzebue, which had been equipped at the expense of Count Romanzoff, threatened to rob us of the prize. England's pride was aroused, and the "Quarterly Review" of January, 1818, expresses a fear of such a disappointment in the following words: — "It would be somewhat mortifying," says the writer

(the late Sir John Barrow, F.R.S.), "if a naval power but of yesterday should complete a discovery in the nineteenth century, which was so happily commenced by Englishmen in the sixteenth, and another Vespusio run away with the honours due to a Columbus." *

In 1816, a more than usual concurrence of favourable winds, currents, and weather had disengaged and carried down from the polar regions north of the Atlantic, a vast body of ice. Icebergs and floes were found floating in great quantities as far south as the 40th parallel of latitude. The very climate of both Northern Europe and America were affected by the absorption of heat they occasioned; and, as an instance of it, Indian corn would not ripen in 1816, in either Pennsylvania or Massachusets, a circumstance previously unknown.

Mr. Barrington, as well as Sir John Barrow, bore well in mind the fact, that could a navigable route be found north about, the commerce of England with the East, more than that of any other nation, would be benefited; and the higher the latitude in which we could pass into the Pacific, the more the distance would be shortened: "For instance," says the latter, "the distance from

* "Quarterly Review," January, 1818: Art. viii., page 219.

Shetland to Behring's Strait, in the 72nd parallel, is just half as long again as on a meridian passing through the pole, or as 1572 leagues to 1048."

The people of England entered into these views, and into all the theories and conjectures of Sir John Barrow. Some of these conjectures are quite startling to one who, like the writer, is able to sit down and peruse them, knowing on what slender premises they were grounded, and seeing what has actually been verified since his death.

In October, 1817, Sir John Barrow published a small diagram to illustrate an article of his upon the existence of a north-west passage, which is now before us; and although he was only then in possession of the information which we have said England possessed at the end of the eighteenth century, yet, guided by a clear judgment and a thorough knowledge of the subject, he filled up the deficient coast in so correct a line that the charts of to-day, upon the same small scale, vary but little from his.

The search for a north-west passage was now actively resumed, and voyage after voyage followed rapidly, — Parry and Franklin executing, and Barrow cheering them on.

Captain James Burney, who, as a lieutenant of

Captain Cook, carried some authority with his opinion, opposed the idea of any communication between the Pacific and Atlantic Oceans, and actually connected the American and Asiatic continents.

The first man chosen to follow on the footsteps of Baffin attempted to close every avenue or outlet to the north-west from the sea that he had discovered. Yet Sir John Barrow was not daunted.

"I have every reason to believe Old Greenland an island, or an archipelago of islands," he said, "and no inclination to deny that some of them may stretch far enough to the westward to form those several Sounds of which Baffin so briefly and vaguely speaks." Shortly after the above lines were written, Parry verified them by really sailing west through an *archipelago of islands* half way to Behring's Strait!

Sir John Barrow, the great promoter of arctic research, while sharing the honours of every fresh discovery, was certainly not desirous of avoiding the responsibility attached to sending men upon a service of so much risk and danger, and was ready to adduce good reasons for doing so. Until the repeated failures of Parry and Franklin convinced him of the impossibility of

using a north-west passage for commercial purposes, Sir John Barrow had evidently fondly hoped to secure to his country the advantages of a shorter route to India: but even then, jealous of her maritime glory, and influenced by a sincere love of science and a desire for the extension of knowledge, he judged rightly that nowhere could the skill and energy of the British Navy be more honourably directed than to geographical discovery in the Frozen Zone.

It had, indeed, entailed much hardship and suffering; but be it remembered that as yet, when Sir John Franklin sailed, no fatal catastrophe had overtaken any one of the many ships that had been employed on that service in modern days.

That Sir John Barrow appreciated fully the difficulties and dangers of arctic service, his writings attest; and a mere selfish desire to see knowledge extended, at any sacrifice of humanity, was assuredly not his failing. He did not live to see the realisation of the confident predictions of his sagacious mind; yet he had seen a vast deal added to our geographical knowledge of the earth's surface,—additions of no small moment in every branch of natural history, as well as in physical science; and the wide world saw and

knew that the race of seamen who had secured to Britain the supremacy of the sea were not deteriorating in time of peace.

It was no narrow or selfishly ambitious feeling that dictated the following words during the time that one expedition was absent in search of the long-sought passage. "They may not succeed," he says, "in that purpose; but they can scarcely fail in being the means of extending the sphere of human knowledge, and if they bring back an accession of this, they cannot be said to have been sent in vain, for 'knowledge is power,' and we may safely commit to the stream of time the beneficial results of its irresistible influence."

Franklin and his hundred and forty followers were the forlorn hope of the North-west Passage. By the sacrifice of their lives, they have secured to us, their countrymen, an honour that perhaps might otherwise never have been won; for it was in seeking for them that Captain M'Clure and his gallant officers and crew succeeded, for the first time in the annals of the world, in passing from the Pacific to the Atlantic Ocean. In the eloquent words of Lord Stanley and Sir Edward Parry, when addressing Captain Cresswell, who first brought the intelligence to England in 1853, "it was a tri-

umph that would not be valued the less highly because it was not stained by bloodshed—a triumph which was not embittered by any single painful or melancholy reminiscence—a triumph not over man, but over nature—a triumph which inflicts no injury and which humiliates no enemy—a triumph not for this age alone, but for posterity—not for England only, but for mankind."

When such is the testimony borne to the glory won by those who have achieved this passage, Sir John Barrow needs no apologist for having been the main promoter of arctic research. The laurel is twined with the cypress-wreath of those who have laid down their lives in this service; and their friends and relatives may proudly wipe away their tears.

The North-west Passage would never have been discovered, but for the devotion of Franklin, his officers, and men; they each volunteered for that duty, and they fell in the performance of it. The party from the "Erebus" and "Terror" which perished, it appears, at the mouth of the Great Fish River, must have gone down some channel from the neighbourhood of Capes Walker or Bunny in Barrow's Strait, and thus have fallen in adding the great link which connected the known coasts of the Parry Archipelago with that of the American

continent. They did not, like the Investigators, achieve the passage by actually passing from ocean to ocean; but it is perfectly possible that at the very moment when Captain M'Clure stood on the northern coast of Banks Land, and assured himself of a water communication between the Pacific and Atlantic Oceans, some lonely survivors of Franklin's expedition may have been watching from King William's Land, that known highway to Behring's Strait, which Dease and Simpson had traversed many years before—a pathway upon whose entrance they yielded up their gallant spirits. Captain M'Clure and his followers can well afford to surrender cheerfully to the illustrious dead that share of the honour reaped which is their due; and the friends who mourn the loss of those who perished in gallantly endeavouring to perform what the "Investigator" so happily effected, may still point to the chart of the Polar Regions, and say "*Si monumentum requiris circumspice!*"

CHAP. II.

Return of the Arctic Squadron of 1848, and immediate Re-equipment of the "Enterprise" and "Investigator."—Appointment of Captain M'Clure.—Preparations for speedy Departure.—The two Vessels pass the Nore.—Heavy Gales in the Channel.—Put into Plymouth.—Engagement of an Interpreter.—Final Departure from England.—Appearance of Arctic Ships.—"Investigator" reaches the South Atlantic.

The Arctic Discovery Squadron, under Capt. Sir James Ross, had hardly returned from its perilous operations of 1848 and 1849, when it was at once determined by Government to re-equip the vessels, in order that they might resume the search after Sir John Franklin's missing ships by the way of Behring's Strait.

The "Enterprise" and "Investigator," it will be remembered, had failed in their attempt to get to the westward of Leopold Island in 1849, and only escaped from that inhospitable spot, to be beset in the drifting pack ice of Barrow's Strait, and swept with it out of Lancaster Sound into Baffin's Bay,

so that they could but just secure their retreat to England before the Arctic Seas became generally sealed for that season.

Tempest-tossed, and ice-worn though they were, yet a little dockyard work soon put the good ships into proper condition for once more resuming their contest with floe and iceberg. Captain Richard Collinson, C.B., was appointed as senior officer and leader of the expedition, to the "Enterprise," and Commander Robert Le Mesurier M'Clure to the "Investigator." The former officer enjoyed a high naval reputation, and in China his abilities as a surveyor had done the State good service; the latter, the destined discoverer of the North-west Passage, had served through a long and severe probation in every grade, until, after a struggle of twenty-six years, he was appointed to the command of the "Investigator," as a reward for the good service he had rendered as First Lieutenant to Sir James Ross, in his voyage of 1848-49.

There was no lack of volunteers for arctic service amongst officers and men in the winter of 1849-50. The most sanguine feelings concerning the cause they were about to engage in, animated the whole nation, and told with excellent effect in the speedy equipment of both ships, and the comple-

tion of their crews; and although the pendants had been hoisted as late as the 19th of December 1849, yet on the 10th of January following the "Enterprise" and "Investigator" were enabled to put to sea from the river Thames with their full complement of men. They were, however, much hampered upon both upper and lower decks, with provisions and stores, a common case with arctic ships, and heavy gales in the Channel having caused both vessels to strain much, it became advisable to put into Plymouth to be caulked—a measure which gave them an opportunity for entering several more good seamen from that well-known nursery of men-of-war's men.

No grass was allowed to grow under their feet, however, at that place; for the vast distance between England and Behring's Strait had to be traversed by way of Cape Horn, in deep-ladened bluff-bowed ships;—winter gales awaited them in the Channel, and equinoctial ones off Cape Horn. All knew there was a weary six months' voyage before they could reach the ice, and that the loss of a month by accident or neglect might cause the highway they sought from Behring's Straits to Melville Island to be closed against them.

At last nearly all was ready, and what was not,

was ordered to be sent to the Sandwich Islands, viâ Panama. Amongst the useful additions shipped before sailing must not be forgotten the German Mr. Mierching, who was engaged as an Interpreter. The proposal had been suddenly made to him one day when he was enjoying his ease in a quiet village in Saxony after returning from a long sojourn in Labrador as a Moravian missionary. He accepted, and was despatched forthwith as fast as rail could take him to London. The Admiralty sent him a few hours afterwards by express to Plymouth, and he arrived only just in time to be tumbled into the "Investigator" before her departure.

A few hours afterwards the Arctic Squadron weighed, and on the 20th of January, 1850, the "Enterprise" and "Investigator" sailed thence with a fair and fresh wind. It will now be my duty to follow the latter vessel and her gallant company in their long and adventurous voyage; and though a minute detail of the every-day operations of the "Investigator" might be far from interesting, I must endeavour to picture to the general and non-professional reader the appearance of the little vessel, whose name will be remembered as long as England holds dear the character of her adventurous arctic navigators.

If the reader should ever have noticed, after a westerly wind in the British Channel, a water-washed looking vessel of barely 400 tons register coming up the Thames, he will have an idea of the size and original build of the vessel in question. It is very possible that he may have seen this very ship, for the "Investigator" was bought from Messrs. Green, of Blackwall. The "fast sailing copper-bottomed A 1, &c." was then doubled with wood in every direction; her bow and stern, according to the then infallible rule, was made to resemble the two ends of a caisoon, by having wood and iron bolted one over the other, until in some places twenty-nine inches of solid timber might have been found, or even more.* Everything in the shape of outward ornament was of course carefully eschewed, and a solemn coating of black paint, but little relieved by a white riband and small figure-head, added yet more to the appearance of strength and weight of the little, but I am afraid I cannot say *pretty*, vessel.

Aloft, in her powerful rigging and large blocks, were seen signs of a departure from the perfect neatness of a Queen's ship—for appearance had to be sacrificed to efficiency—and her deeply immersed hull, her decks, covered with casks securely

lashed, and the many strange articles, such as sledges, ice-triangles, ice-saws, and crow's nest, all told their own tale, and were well in keeping with her character and destination. The crew of this good ship was, as the sequel will show, not unworthy of her; throughout Capt. M'Clure's journal I meet constant expressions of admiration for the men under his command; indeed, so early as the 24th of January, he says, when speaking of the accidental loss of his topmast:—"Vexatious as it certainly was, still it was attended with one advantage, as it gave me an insight into the disposition of my crew, and a more orderly set of men have seldom been collected."

Thus early was that mutual confidence sown which afterwards yielded such good fruit.

Battling with foul winds and heavy seas, occasionally losing sight of her consort, it was not until the 20th of February that the "Investigator" got the N.E. trade wind of the Atlantic. Whilst passing from one tropic to the other, care was taken during the fine weather of that region to make good such defects as had shown themselves in the vessel, and were within the power of her artificers to remedy; and all due precautions were employed to insure the health and comfort of officers and men.

CHAP. III.

Slow Sailing of the Arctic Ships.—Reach Terra del Fuego.—H.M.S.V. "Gorgon" in Possession Bay.—Reach Port Famine.—Shipwrecked American Schooner.—American Go-a-headism.—Sublime Scenery.—"Investigator" meets the "Enterprise."—American River Steamer in the Pacific.—Heavy Gale.—Captain M'Clure's Care of the Men.

It was not until the 18th March, nearly two months after leaving England, that the "Investigator" crossed the Southern Tropic in the Atlantic Ocean, although a heavy press of canvass had constantly been carried, and the two vessels had not been even in company to detain one another. Nearly a month afterwards they had only sighted Cape Virgins, that headland of the South American continent which marks the eastern entrance of the Strait of Magellan. This rate of progress gives the best idea of the speed of the Arctic Discovery Ships, and enables us better to appreciate the feelings of anxiety with which Capt. M'Clure, his officers, and crew, must have watched the precious hours as they flitted by,

as well as to give them due credit for the perseverance and ability with which they did so much with such inferior means.

On the 15th of April, land again gladdened their sight, and, inhospitable as it was, it was welcome after eighty-five days of sea work; beating along that coast where so many points bear English names that sound strangely there—names that tell how England's good and gallant seamen have toiled and hoped, and suffered in the great cause of human advancement, from Anson and Drake, proud Admirals,—to poor Allen Gardner, who perished in a noble effort to carry civilization to the wretched Fuegians. On Point Dungeness were seen large troops of Guanachoes, a species of the lama; but a lee shore gave Capt. M'Clure enough to do to keep his ship in safety, until upon the turn of tide he was enabled to push westward against the contrary wind which prevails in this strait. Next day the "Investigator" reached Possession Bay, and found H.M.S.V. "Gorgon" there, ready to assist in towing her when necessary into the Pacific Ocean; and accordingly by her aid and the zealous exertions of her Commander, the "Investigator," on the 17th April, arrived at Port Famine.

At this wretched Chilian penal settlement, Captain

M'Clure learnt that the "Enterprise" had already passed, and what was still more to be regretted, taken with her all the bullocks, so that the prospect of fresh beef for the "Investigator's" crew was no nearer than the Sandwich Islands, to reach which the wide Pacific Ocean had to be traversed as the Atlantic had already been. The most interesting objects to be seen at Port Famine were the wreck and cast-away crew of an American schooner, once bound to California. The stoical indifference to the reverse of fortune with which it had pleased Providence to visit the two Yankee owners—for they were there,—struck our arctic explorers much; and the unshaken firmness with which they determined not to be beaten was illustrative of the best phase of their national character.

Their tale was a strange, but not an unusual one. In the height of the Californian fever then raging, one of the owners had been a vendor of hardware, the other the proprietor of a dry provision store in New York. The latter, walking one day on the quay, saw the schooner of which we are now speaking advertised for sale; and being struck with the number of persons daily embarking for California, the thought suddenly entered his head that in that El Dorado he might make a fortune far more

rapidly than even in the smart town of New York. At this moment his eye chanced to light upon the vendor of hardware, likewise apparently in a brown study; and addressing him, the dry-goodsman asked, "what he thought of a Californian venture?" "Just what I was thinking of," was the reply; and with true American *go-aheadism*, they at once decided on selling off, and embarking their all, four thousand dollars each, in the schooner. The thing was done; and ten weeks afterwards they were cast away upon the south extreme of America, and utterly ruined!

Yet they were not dispirited, and they wanted no sympathy: "No!" said the dry-provision merchant, when it was suggested that he had better return to New York and adhere to his old line of business, "No! I guess I'll never go back to New York; I'll get somehow to California, and right myself yet!"

The "Gorgon" took some of the men on board until they could be put into their own countrymen's vessels.

Leaving Port Famine, the "Investigator" proceeded on her way, passing the wild and, in many places, sublime scenery which skirts the shores of this wonderful and intricate inland sea navigation,

—the lofty mountains, which Captain M'Clure truly describes as presenting at once the characteristics of the equatorial and polar regions, their summits being covered with glaciers, whilst their bases are clothed with dense and humid forests, whose rank luxuriance of vegetation resembles that of the thickest East Indian jungle.

After rounding Cape Frowards, they found the "Enterprise" at anchor in Fortescue Bay, and had a good opportunity of comparing their relative courses since parting company. By the charts, the two discovery ships had seldom been sixty miles apart, and they had crossed the Equator within thirty-five miles of each other, though without meeting. Such are the not unusual accidents of a sea voyage; and at any rate neither Captain Collinson nor his colleague could accuse themselves of being the cause of delay to the other. Whilst at this anchorage, detained by strong and foul winds, an American river steamer, bound to California, passed by. She had many passengers, and took our voyagers' mail to Valparaiso, it being the intention of her captain, a reckless sort of individual, to take the inshore channels which lead from Cape Horn to Chiloe, before he trusted his frail-built vessel to the mercy of the wide Pacific.

That steamer appeared to have made a marvellously quick passage, so much so as to induce some of the "Investigator's" officers to ask the skipper if he were certain of the dates of departure and arrival. The reply, if not pleasing to ears polite, contained in it a great truth: "Well, officer," said Jonathan, "I ain't sure, for I have lived so long amongst liars that I don't know when I am not speaking the truth!"

On the 19th of April the weather moderated sufficiently for the "Gorgon" to take the "Enterprise" and "Investigator" in tow, and they started at an early hour against a breeze which otherwise would have still kept sailing ships idle. Fuegians, in frail canoes, chased them in hopes of barter, but were unable to communicate, and next day the vessels passed Cape Pillar, the western boundary of the strait.

Once in the broad Pacific, the swell of a western sea caused the hawsers to carry away so often as to prevent the towing of more than one vessel at a time. The "Enterprise" was first taken, and a good offing given her, and then the "Investigator" was helped on in her turn. As night came on, however, the gale freshened from the north-west, and the "Enterprise" and

"Investigator" parted company, never again to rejoin.

During the night of the 20th, the "Gorgon" was obliged to cut away the towing-hawser of the "Investigator," and after lying by her until daylight, Captain Paynter, of the former, bore up to look for the "Enterprise."

A heavy gale now came on, and no canvass could be shown to carry the "Investigator" to the westward, away from the iron-bound shores of Patagonia, distant at the time not more than thirty or forty miles. The increasing gale and sea afterwards drove them far away to the south-west, and it was not until the 30th of April that it abated, and enabled the tempest-tossed ship to resume her course for the next rendezvous, Honolulu, in the Sandwich Islands.

Even at this early period of the voyage, every precaution was taken by Captain M'Clure to prevent the seeds of scurvy being sown amongst his men. He increased the amount of vegetables and fresh preserved meat, issued them as a ration every alternate day, and, as soon as the weather permitted it, the officers and crew were constantly employed in their watches restoring, examining, and ascertaining the quality of the provisions, upon

which Captain M'Clure's experience told him the result of his voyage would so much depend. No one knew better than he that in the far north man is a machine not to be replaced; that without the zealous labour and the skill and energy of the crew, the best officers are worthless. To work a willing seaman to death, or into scurvy, and then turn round and lay the blame on the nature of the arctic service, was not the system of the man who was about to achieve the North-west Passage; and in adopting the course he did, he took the best method of showing his men that, so far as circumstances would admit, he would always study their health and comfort. The crew on their side, like true seamen, repaid him with unbounded confidence and hearty exertions.

CHAP. IV.

Voyage continued to Honolulu.—Leak in the Bread-Room.—Loneliness of this Ocean.—Good Feeling between Officers and Men.—Arrival at Honolulu.—Replenishing and Departure.—Great Anxiety of Officers and Men to reach the Ice.—Passing the Aleutian Islands.—Dense Fogs.—The Arctic Circle crossed.—Meet the "Plover" Depôt Ship.—Unfavourable Report of the State of the Ice.—Captain M'Clure's Plan of Operations.—Preparations for meeting the Ice.—H.M.S. "Herald" met with.—Captain Kellett's Discovery.

The whole of the month of May, 1850, was passed by the "Investigator" in making the best of her way towards Honolulu; and the only incident worthy of notice was the loss of a topmast, and the discovery of the destruction of a large quantity of bread, owing to a leak in the bread-room, which could not be got at: nearly a thousand pounds of biscuit were found to be so mouldy that it had to be thrown away; but Capt. M'Clure consoled himself with the certainty of being able to replenish at the first port he reached.

On June 2nd they attained the limit of the S.E.

trade wind, in lat. 17° 44′ S., long. 105° 54′ W. During the fortnight that the "Investigator" was steering diagonally across that space which intervenes between the Southern Tropic and the Equator of the Pacific Ocean, the monotony of their lives pressed heavily upon both crew and officers. Five weary months of salt water is enough to try the patience of any men; and Capt. M'Clure's journal here laments the loneliness of the vast region of water which rolls from America to the Polynesian Isles, a fine and fair wind, clear sky, and smooth sea, hardly compensating for the absence of every living thing except themselves: not even a bird or a fish broke the dreariness of the ocean solitude. Every day served, however, to unite more strongly the bond of mutual good feeling between the commander and his crew. Much heavy work connected with the re-stowage and examination of the provisions fell, of course, upon the latter; but they did it with such cheerfulness and good-will as to draw forth the remark in Capt. M'Clure's handwriting:—"I have much confidence in them; with such a spirit what may not be expected, even if difficulties should arise?" This good opinion of his men was fully borne out in the sequel.

The Equator was crossed on the 15th June, and

the S.E. trade kindly favoured them into 7° north latitude. On the 23rd of June the N.E. trade wind reached them, and aided by it they made on the 24th the longest run the "Investigator" had as yet performed in twenty-four hours; namely, one hundred and eighty-six miles.

On June 29th, the snow-capped peak of Mona-Kea, on the Island of Owhyhee, showed itself, and announced that at last they were nearing a port, after a sea voyage of 15,000 miles.

Running through the western islands of the Sandwich group, they anchored, gladly enough, on the 1st July, outside the reefs of Honolulu Harbour, the wind being foul for entering its narrow mouth.

There was no time to be lost, however, and all necessary supplies were speedily purchased, Capt. M'Clure being much aided in his labour by Capt. Aldham of H. M. brig "Swift," then in the port. The very next day, all the stores were ready for shipment, and the "Investigator" was prepared for the prosecution of her voyage with the utmost despatch. The crew of the "Swift," with true sailors' generosity, undertook this duty in the place of the men of the "Investigator," who were at once allowed all the leave that could be afforded them to wander at liberty about the beautiful island of Oahu.

The "Enterprise," Capt. Collinson, had already, it appeared, called at this port, and had replenished, and gone on, in prosecution of his instructions. The anxiety of Capt. M'Clure to overtake his chief, and rejoin him in time for entering the Polar Sea in 1850, can be better conceived than described. Abundant supplies of fruit and vegetables were purchased, although the high prices occasioned by so large a demand, as well as the arrival of the annual fleets of American whalers, formed a considerable obstacle to the private purchases of officers and men. By a remarkable fatality, too, their hopes of obtaining a good supply of fresh beef were again destined to be disappointed, for the natives, in attempting to land the bullocks from a coaster, had drowned all but one of them.

The Consul-General, Miller, as well as some of the merchants, extended due hospitality to Capt. M'Clure, and although he had occasion to remark that Yankee influence was all powerful in these Islands, — the American stepping-stones to the Empire of the East, as they have been appropriately called, — yet neither he, nor the Investigators generally, had any cause to complain of want of courtesy towards themselves, or of sympathy for the noble mission on which they were employed.

The 4th July, 1850, saw the "Investigator" in every respect ready for the Polar voyage, which was her appointed task. Every available space was again filled with provisions, and in addition to the solitary bullock, a dozen sheep, and vegetables sufficient to last forty days, were embarked. Her weak or sickly men had been invalided, and their places supplied by volunteers, and all hands were much refreshed and re-invigorated by even the short stay they had made in so pleasant a spot. On leaving Honolulu, the same evening, Capt. M'Clure remarks that the health and cheerfulness of all was most gratifying, and that no vessel could have entered the ice under more favourable circumstances after so long and trying a sea voyage.

The ice, however, was still full forty degrees of latitude distant, the "Enterprise" far ahead, and the season would be closing in, in about sixty days' time. Well, therefore, might Capt. M'Clure feel anxious when he looked at his deeply-laden vessel, and pondered on the quickest mode of reaching Behring's Straits. The old established course from the Sandwich Islands to the Strait, was by hauling out to the N.W. across the N.E. trade, so as to strike the Asiatic coast in or about the latitude of Petropauloffskoi, and then taking advantage of the

westerly winds to run along that coast, and thus avoid the dangerous channels through the Aleutian Islands, which are still imperfectly known, and subject to dense fogs and strong tides. This, however, is a long route, generally occupying sixty days, and Capt. M'Clure had heard of another and more direct one, but at the same time the risk of his vessel being driven down upon the dangerous and inhospitable coast north of Vancouver's Island and Princess Charlotte's Island, was duly pointed out. Fortunately, he afterwards met at Honolulu with an intelligent merchant sailor, who urged him by all means to steer a *direct* course to the northward, and not to fear north-west gales at that season of the year. This advice, together with the emergency of the case, induced him to decide upon making direct for the Aleutian Islands, and trusting to the "sweet little cherub that sits up aloft" for the winds he might require.

At midnight a course was shaped accordingly, and M'Clure went to his bed to dream of catching the "Enterprise," for great was the fear among both officers and men lest Capt. Collinson, instead of waiting for his consort, should take the "Plover" on into the ice, and leave the "Investigator" to occupy her

place, a rumour to that effect having been whispered about at Honolulu.

No other bad effects had resulted from the liberty given to the "Investigator's" men at Honolulu, after their long imprisonment on board, than that six of them were laid up for a few days, in consequence of having, sailor-like, taken a great deal too much equestrian exercise—one or two having actually cut their feet with the stirrup-irons through riding hard without any shoes.

Favoured by strong and fair winds, the ship made rapid progress to the northward, although dense fogs gave the captain and master much anxiety, lest they should be carried east or west of that channel through the Aleutian Isles, for which they were endeavouring to steer.

On the sixteenth day after leaving Oahu, while expecting to sight the land, the mist lifted sufficiently to show a bluff point, with a detached rock lying off it. This satisfied them that the island they had wished to sight was the one now at hand, and, as the "Investigator" was swept rapidly along in a tide race with a fair wind, they had only time to observe, on the bow, the western extreme of the Island of Tchunam. It was but a momen-

tary glimpse, however, that they were blessed with of either, and this was all they saw of the Aleutian Chain; but when certain of being clear of, and north of them, the "Investigator" steered for Gore Island.

Some iden may be formed of the denseness of the fogs which prevail in this region, and add so materially to its dangers, from the circumstance of some of the sea birds, such as the Little Auk (*Alca alle*) striking against the rigging in their flight, and falling on board, so as to be captured.

But fog or no fog, the ship was still pushed on with the utmost press of sail that any regard to safety would permit. A sea but little known, however, was before the "Investigator,"—a sea interspersed with islands whose position was so far from certain that, in some cases, as in those of St. Paul and St. George, they were not placed in the Chart. Many an anxious hour was passed on board the ship, their greatest fear being lest, by grounding the vessel and detention, they should be too late for entering the ice in the season of 1850.

On July 26th, the stud-sails were for the first time taken in since leaving Oahu, and next day they made King's Island, and had a narrow escape of being swept on shore by a rapid and unexpected

current. Happily, a good bearing, by compass, of the land was obtained before they were again enveloped in fog, so that they were able to shape a course between the two Diomede Islands; but still running the gauntlet, as they were doing, was fraught with peril, and nothing but the urgency of the case induced Capt. M'Clure to persist, although it might be that in such a sea, and amongst so many tides and currents, a straight course on end was the safer one.

The words of her commander convey the best idea of the ship's position and his feelings as they approached the Channel:—"The Channel is a good one doubtless in clear weather; but in a fog which never gave an horizon more than four hundred yards distant, with a very strong and unknown current, with a fresh fair wind and deep water, it was an exceedingly anxious time for me, more especially when an unusual ripple was perceived, resembling the tidal race of Alderney or Portland. The noise was so great that you could not hear what was said without great vocal exertion; the sea was breaking into the channels, and the deep sea lead showed that the ship was sweeping over twenty-two fathoms' water only." The look-out man even reported breakers ahead, and not small

was the general delight when, by the deepening of the soundings and the cessation of the tide ripple, the voyagers guessed themselves to have been swept into Kotzebue Sound, though disagreeably close past one of the islands at its entrance.

On July 29th, 1850, the Arctic Circle was crossed, and the Admiralty clothing supplied by the Lords Commissioners of the Admiralty for the use of seamen in those regions was now issued to the crew. Arctic sights now rapidly accumulated to interest the many novices in the "Investigator," and to awaken in the mind of her commander recollections of his former trying and unsuccessful voyage on the opposite side of America into that same frozen sea.

The first to greet them was the "Plover" depôt-ship, then commanded by Commander Moore, who, with two boats, was making inquiries amongst the natives of Wainwright Inlet, concerning some of the thousand and one Esquimaux fictions that then enlivened the monotony of Kotzebue Sound. The eager query of how long since the "Enterprise" had gone to the northward? was answered by the "Plover" informing them that she had not been fallen in with at all; this the officers of the "Investigator" presumed might be accounted for, from the

dense fogs which had lately prevailed having prevented her being seen. The "Enterprise" had left Honolulu as early as the 30th June; she was the faster sailing ship, and there was no reason to suppose she had not been equally favoured in winds.

The news of the state of the ice in Behring's Straits was most unsatisfactory, especially to those who did not know that its movements are often so sudden as to render a report of more than twenty-four hours old of no value. The "Plover" had seen the polar ice so densely packed from Wainwright Inlet upon the American coast to lat. 71° 30′ N., and long. 164° 28′ W., as apparently to defy all efforts to push a vessel to the north-east.

In recording this information, Capt. M'Clure adds in his journal this remarkable sentence, so well verified by the result, and showing how decidedly he had made up his mind to the course to be pursued. "This," says he, "was not what I anticipated from the continuance of south-east winds, but the season is not far advanced, and much may yet be accomplished *ere we are frozen up.*"

The Investigators were generally struck with the healthy, and, in most cases, robust appearance of the "Plover's" crew; indeed, this was not to be wondered at, considering they had wintered every

year they spent in the Arctic Zone, in a place like Kotzebue Sound, where the natives are able to live upon the resources of the country, and where monotony, darkness, and hunger do not weigh upon them in any extraordinary degree.

Before bearing up for Cape Lisburne (the next rendezvous that Capt. Collinson had appointed), and where the "Herald," Capt. Kellett, was known to be cruising, all the letter-bags of the "Investigator" were sent on board the "Plover;" and at the same time that admirable despatch from Capt. M'Clure to the Admiralty, in which he clearly stated what his intentions were, should he be left to act upon them. How to the very letter he carried them out, aided by his gallant officers and men, will be seen in the sequel.

Copy of a Letter from Commander M'Clure to the Secretary of the Admiralty.

"Her Majesty's Dispovery Ship 'Investigator,' at Sea,
"(Lat. 51° 26' N.; Long. 172° 35' W.),
"20 July, 1850.

"SIR,

"As I have received instructions from Captain Collinson, C.B., clear and unembarrassing (a copy of which I enclose), to proceed to Cape Lisburne,

in the hope of meeting him in that vicinity, as he anticipates being detained a day or two by the 'Plover' in Kotzebue Sound, it is unnecessary to add that every exertion shall be made to reach that rendezvous, but I can scarce venture to hope that, even under very favourable circumstances, I shall be so fortunate as to accomplish it ere the 'Enterprise' will have rounded that Cape, as, from her superior sailing, she hitherto having beaten us, by eight days to Cape Virgins, and from Magellan Straits to Oahu by six. It is, therefore, under the probable case that this vessel may form a detached part of the expedition, that I feel it my duty to state, for the information of the Lords Commissioners of the Admiralty, the course which, under such a contingency, I shall endeavour to pursue, and I have to request that you will lay the same before their Lordships.

"1st. *After passing Cape Lisburne, it is my intention to keep in the open water, which, from the different reports that I have read, appears, about this season of the year, to make between the American coast and the main pack, as far to the eastward as the* 130*th meridian, unless a favourable opening should earlier appear in the ice, which would lead me to infer that I might push more directly for Banks*

Land, which I think is of the utmost importance to thoroughly examine.

"In the event of thus far succeeding, and the season continuing favourable for further operations, it would be my anxious desire to get to the northward of Melville Island, and resume our search along its shores, and the islands adjacent, as long as the navigation can be carried on, and then secure for the winter in the most eligible position which offers.

"2nd. In the ensuing spring, as soon as it is practicable for travelling parties to start, I should despatch as many as the state of the crew will admit of, in different directions, each being provided with 40 days' provisions, with directions to examine minutely all bays, inlets, and islands towards the N.E., ascending occasionally some of the highest points of land, so as to be enabled to obtain extended views, being particularly cautious, in their advance, to observe any indication of a break-up in the ice, so that their return to the ship may be effected without hazard, even before the expenditure of their provisions would otherwise render it necessary.

"3rd. Supposing the parties to have returned (without obtaining any clue of the absent ships),

and the vessel liberated about the 1st of August, my object would then be to push on towards Wellington Inlet (assuming that that channel communicates with the Polar Sea), and search both its shores, unless, in so doing, some indication should be met with to show that parties from any of Captain Austin's vessels had previously done so, when I should return and endeavour to penetrate in the direction of Jones' Sound, carefully examining every place that was practicable. Sir, should our efforts to reach this point be successful, and in the route no traces be discernible of the long-missing expedition, I should not then be enabled longer to divest myself of the feeling, painful as it must be to arrive at such a conclusion, that all human aid would then be perfectly unavailing, and therefore, under such a conviction, I would think it my duty, if possible, to return to England, or, at all events, endeavour to reach some port that would ensure that object upon the following year.

4th. In the event of this being our last communication, I would request you to assure their Lordships that no apprehension whatever need be entertained of our safety until the autumn of 1854, as we have on board three years of all species of provisions, commencing from the 1st September

proximo, which, without much deprivation, may be made to extend a period of four years, as, moreover, whatever is killed by the hunting parties I intend to issue in lieu of the usual rations, which will still further protract our resources.

"It gives me great pleasure to say that the good effects of the fruit and vegetables (a large quantity of which we took on board at Oahu) are very perceptible, in the increased vigour of the men, who at this moment are in as excellent condition as it is possible to desire, and evince a spirit of confidence and a cheerfulness of disposition which are beyond all appreciation.

"5th. *Should difficulties apparently insurmountable encompass our progress, so as to render it a matter of doubt whether the vessel could be extricated, I should deem it expedient, in that case, not to hazard the lives of those entrusted to my charge after the winter of* 1852, *but, in the ensuing spring, quit the vessel with sledges and boats, and make the best of our way to either Pond's Bay, Leopold Harbour, the Mackenzie, or for the whalers, according to circumstances.*

"Finally. In this letter I have endeavoured to give an outline of what I wish to accomplish (and what, under moderately favourable seasons, appears to me attainable), the carrying out of which, how-

ever, not resting upon human exertions, it is impossible even to surmise if any or what portion may be successful. But my object in addressing you is to place their Lordships in possession of my intentions up to the latest period, so, as far as possible, to relieve their minds from any unnecessary anxiety as to our fate; and having done this—a duty which is incumbent on me, from the deep sympathy expressed by their Lordships, and participated in by all classes of our countrymen, in the interesting object of this expedition,—I have only to add that, with the ample resources which a beneficent Government and a generous country have placed at our disposal (not anything that can add to our comfort being wanting), we enter upon this distinguished service with a firm determination to carry out, as far as in our feeble strength we are permitted, their benevolent intentions.

"I have, &c.

"(Signed) ROBERT M'CLURE, Commander."

Not a letter written that day contained any expression but that of a hopeful issue to their enterprise, and if anxiety was expressed, it was only that of being delayed, or being too late. The calm and

resolute spirit of their leader is marked in the paragraph penned this same night. "I consider," he writes, "that we have said adieu to the world for the next two years. May that arm which has conducted us so far in safety still continue its protection upon a service where all else is weakness indeed."

On July 31st, the vessel was prepared for falling in with the ice; the crow's-nest was sent up to the masthead, ready for the look-out men to take their station in; whale-lines and ice-anchors were placed at hand ready for heaving, or tracking the ship through loose ice; and ice-chisels, saws, ladders, and all the many articles of equipment peculiar to arctic service were placed on deck.

The current had swept the "Investigator" thirty miles north of her reckoning, and Cape Lisburne was far astern when H.M.S. "Herald," Captain Kellett, hove in sight.

This vessel, it will be remembered, was annually ordered from her surveying service in Central America, to communicate with, and replenish the provisions of the "Plover" depôt-ship. The "Herald" usually arrived in June, and left Behring's Straits in September. Her object in cruising about the Strait was mainly the hope of falling in with the

squadron of Sir John Franklin, should either of his ships have accomplished the passage from the Atlantic to the Pacific Ocean; but the "Herald" likewise did good service in correcting the charts of this neighbourhood, and in adding materially to our geographical knowledge. The most important discovery, however, that Captain Henry Kellett had made, and one which, in connection with the nature of the ice met with by the "Investigator" westward of Banks Land, is deeply interesting to those curious about the yet unknown regions which lie around our pole, was the sighting of an extensive land north and north-west of Behring's Strait. In Captain Kellett's despatches to England, bearing date 1849, the discovery is graphically described.

"At 3 A.M. the 17th of August, the temperature of the sea suddenly fell from 40° to 36°; the wind became light, and excessively cold. Shortened sail, supposing that I was very near the ice; frequent snow showers.

"At 5 A.M. wind shifted suddenly from the N.W. in a sharp squall with heavy snow. Shortly after 8, when one of these snow storms cleared off, the packed ice was seen from the masthead from S.S.W. to N.N.W., five miles distant. The weather was so bad that I bore up for the rendezvous. The

weather, however, as suddenly cleared up, and I hauled my wind for the north-western extreme of the ice that had been seen. At 9 40 the exciting report of 'Land-ho!' was made from the masthead; they were both soon afterwards crowded.

"In running a course along the pack towards our first discovery, a small group of islands was reported on our port beam, a considerable distance within the outer margin of the ice.

"The pack here was not so close as I found it before. Lanes of water could be seen reaching almost up to the group, but too narrow to enter unless the ship had been sufficiently fortified to force a hole for herself.

"These small islands at intervals were very distinct, and were not considered at the time very distant.

"Still more distant than this group (from the deck) a very extensive and high land was reported, which I had been watching for some time, and anxiously awaited a report from some one else. There was a fine clear atmosphere (such a one as can only be seen in this climate), except in the direction of this extended land, where the clouds rolled in numerous immense masses, occasionally leaving the very lofty peaks uncapped, where could

be distinctly seen columns, pillars, and very broken peaks, characteristic of the higher headlands in this sea—East Cape and Cape Lisburne, for example.

"With the exception of the N.E. and S.E. extremes, none of the lower land could be seen, unless, indeed, what I took at first for a small group of islands within the pack edge was a point of this great land.

"This island or point was distant 25 miles from the ship's track, higher parts of the land seen, not less, I consider, than 60 miles. When we hove to off the first land seen, the northern extreme of the great land showed out to the eastward for a moment, and so clear as to cause some who had doubts before to cry out, 'There, Sir, is the land quite plain.'

"From the time land was reported until we hove to under it, we ran 25 miles directly for it. At first we could not see that the pack joined it, but as we approached the island we found the pack to rest on the island, and to extend from it as far as the eye could reach, to the E.S.E.

"The weather, which had been fine all day, now changed suddenly to dense clouds and snow showers, blowing fresh from the south, with so much sea that I did not anchor as I intended.

"I left the ship with two boats; the senior lieu-

tenant, Mr. Maguire, Mr. Seemann, naturalist, and Mr. Collinson, mate, in one; Mr. Goodridge, surgeon, Mr. Pakenham, midshipman, and myself in the other, almost despairing of being able to reach the island.

"The ship kept off and on outside the thickest part of the loose ice, through which the boats were obliged to be very careful in picking their way, on the S.E. side, where I thought I might have ascended. We reached the island, and found running on it a very heavy sea; the first lieutenant, however, landed, having backed his boat in until he could get foothold (without swimming), and then jumped overboard. I followed his example; the others were anxious to do the same, but the sea was so high that I could not permit them.

"We hoisted the jack and took possession of the island with the usual ceremonies, in the name of Her Most Gracious Majesty Queen Victoria.

"The extent we had to walk over was not more than thirty feet. From this space, and a short distance that we scrambled up, we collected eight species of plants; specimens of the rock were also brought away.

"With the time we could spare and our materials, the island was perfectly inaccessible to us.

This was a great disappointment to us, as from its summit, which is elevated above the sea 1,400 feet, much could have been seen, and all doubt set aside, more particularly as I knew the moment I got on board I should be obliged to carry sail to get off the pack, and out of the bight of it we were in; neither could I expect that at this late period of the season the weather would improve.

"The island on which I landed is four miles and a half in extent east and west, and about two and a half north and south, in the shape of a triangle, the western end being its apex. It is almost inaccessible on all sides, and a solid mass of granite. Innumerable black and white divers (common to this sea) here found a safe place to deposit their eggs and bring up their young; not a walrus or seal was seen on its shore, or on the ice in its vicinity. We observed here none of the small land birds that were so numerous about us before making the land.

"It becomes a nervous thing to report a discovery of land in these regions without actually landing on it, after the unfortunate mistake to the southward; but as far as a man can be certain, who has 130 pair of eyes to assist him, and all agreeing, I am certain we have discovered an extensive land.

I think, also, it is more than probable that these peaks we saw are a continuation of the range of mountains seen by the natives off Cape Jakan (coast of Asia), mentioned by Baron Wrangell in his Polar Voyages. I returned to the ship at 7 P.M., and very reluctantly made all the sail we could carry from this interesting neighbourhood, to the south-east, the wind at the time allowing me to lie just clear of the pack." *

This land some geographers suppose to extend in continuous or broken masses to the east and northward, and to form a portion of the vast archipelago of islands lying north of Barrow's Straits, and directly that Captain Kellett's discovery was reported in England, it gave rise to a strong hope that Captain Collinson's expedition would be able to reach it, and follow along the southern coast towards Melville Island, as Sir Edward Parry had succeeded in doing from the opposite direction, thirty years before.

* An American report of a later date denies the existence of this land, of whose existence Captain Kellett says he feels pretty certain; but until some one actually sails over the spot, we have as much reason to believe those who saw land as those who did not.

CHAP. V.

The "Investigator" gives up the Hope of meeting the "Enterprise," and departs alone. — The first Ice. — Immense Herd of Walruses. — Mothers and Babies. — Value of the Walrus to the Esquimaux. — A Blind Lead. — Cape Barrow doubled. — Proceeding in a North-easterly Direction. — Great Excitement. — Three Esquimaux met with. — Their Astonishment at Sight of the Vessel.

The most extensive body of "open water" in 1850 lay in the direction of Point Barrow, the turning point of America, and which the Investigators were impatient to reach. The "Enterprise" had not yet been seen, but the fogs had been dense, and the weather unfavourable for meeting her, so that all conspired to make the impatient men and officers conjecture that she was still far ahead, and waiting for them. Captain Kellett, the senior officer, was not so sanguine as to the "Enterprise" having made an equally quick passage, yet he felt the responsibility he should incur, should she have passed, by detaining her consort. Captain M'Clure, too, pointed out how valuable every hour was to

him, and to the important service he was upon; for he well knew the value of the arctic maxim, that a day lost often entails a whole season of fruitless labour. At last Captain Kellett consented that the "Investigator" should part company; but he first of all supplied Captain M'Clure's wants, by giving him three volunteers, and furnishing him with such articles as his own stores would admit of. The reader will sympathise with the generous feelings of those who, like the captain and officers of the "Herald," were thus for the last time, perhaps, in this world, shaking by the hand men bound upon a service as hazardous as it was glorious, and they will understand how trying a moment it must have been for one circumstanced as Captain Kellett was, to say to such a body as the Investigators — "Go on!" when he knew full well that from where they then stood there lay before them for full 900 miles, upon the one hand a shoal and dangerous coast, upon the other a heavy and hopeless sea of ice.

The "Investigator" had not long borne up on her solitary course under a heavy press of sail, when the signal was made,—"Had you better not wait forty-eight hours?"

The reply was characteristic: "*Important duty. Cannot upon my own responsibility.*" In a few

hours the "Investigator" was alone, the wind changing to the N.E. quarter.

On the 2nd August in the morning the first ice was seen extending across ahead, the latitude at the time being about 72° north. On getting close to it immense herds of walruses were seen basking upon the loose masses: huge bulls, with splendid tusks, which would have delighted the eye of a Gordon Cumming; females, with their numerous cubs playing about, formed a sight novel and interesting even to the old Greenland ice-master. A gun was at first loaded with grape and canister for the purpose of shooting some of them; but the order was countermanded by Captain M'Clure, from the kindly feelings awakened by the affection evinced between the mothers and babes of this brute community. Some of these creatures were conjectured to weigh as much as thirty-five hundredweight, and the ice when relieved of their weight rose about two feet.

These ferocious-looking creatures are found in great numbers in Behring's Strait, and have been so since the earliest dates. All our early voyagers speak of them; and the well-known sketch in Cook's Voyages of the conflict between his men and the walruses has been seen by most people.

It is only fair to observe, however, that this representation does some injustice to a brute whose character is naturally inoffensive; although, when assailed in the water, it is not deficient in courage. If in company with the female or its young, the self-devotion it evinces excels that of most animals. Both male and female have tusks; but these are so situated as to be of but little use when the creature is out of the water, unless for aiding them in scaling the steep and rugged sides of ice-hummocks. The females are sometimes seen with two cubs at a time, but more generally with only one. They suckle their young, and from the different sizes and periods at which they have been seen doing so, voyagers are led to believe that for twelve or eighteen months the young one is dependent upon the mother for nourishment. They feed upon the submarine plants of the arctic regions; and as far as may be judged from the teeth, they do not appear to eat fish or seal, although it is sometimes asserted that they do so. Their thick skins, plentiful blubber, wholesome flesh, and ivory tusks, render the walrus a valuable prize to the Esquimaux. Wherever they are found, and in Behring's Strait especially, a considerable traffic is carried on by them with the Siberian traders, in the

exchange of ivory for Russian knives and kettles. Whilst we have been making this digression about walruses, the "Investigator" has been running on nearly due north, in the 166th meridian, or at least as much so as the ice would let her; the current aiding her the while, to the extent of sixteen miles in twenty-four hours. On August 4th, Captain M'Clure discovered that he was running and working up a "*blind lead*," or *cul-de-sac*; out of which it was advisable to make his way, by retracing his steps. This was done as rapidly as possible, and they arrived on the 5th August, off Wainwright Inlet, and again sighted the "Plover" for a short time. Keeping now very close to the American coast, or as much so as the ice would admit, the vessel made rapid progress towards Point Barrow. At midnight, at the distance of about ten miles from the land, and in seventy-three fathoms water, they rounded the north-west extreme of the American continent, and began their progress towards the eastward, and towards *home!* What joy was in that sound, and in the thought of having at any rate achieved one difficulty that had never before been mastered by a ship. On the morning of the 6th August, 1850, the officers and crew of the "Investigator" felt free from all anxiety upon the score of being able to enter the

Arctic Ocean from Behring's Strait and turn their backs upon the Pacific. That was now an accomplished fact, and a good month of the best navigable season was still before them. Their next aspiration was to reach Melville Island; but as far as the eye could reach in that direction, a waste of ice was before them, and such ice as few if any navigators, even in the Arctic Zone, had ever seen before; and the fact of a two-knot-per-hour current setting southward off Point Barrow, told Captain M'Clure pretty plainly whither the pack would drift him, if he got entangled or beset in it. To reach the *land-water*, or the space between the American coast and the line of heavy ice, which from its great draught of water was checked by the shallow nature of the sea, at distances varying from a few yards to sometimes a mile in width, and, once in that land-water, to struggle to the eastward for that open sea off the Mackenzie river which Sir John Richardson speaks of from Esquimaux report, was the course he now decided upon. The wind came round to the E.S.E., with rain and mist; and against these obstacles the good ship struggled. On the one hand, lay a low and dangerous coast, devoid of any shelter or haven, on the other a barrier of packed ice formed of great floe

pieces and hummocks; the intervening space also being much covered with stray masses, so dense and heavy in their nature as to cause the vessel to tremble in every timber whenever she unavoidably struck any of them. Now they were sailing in a dense fog, the hand-lead and look-out man their only security against shipwreck; and anon in a gleam of sunshine and calm, towing with all their boats ahead. The excitement was great for all, but all anxiety for the future was merged in joy at the present. The men entered fully into the enthusiasm of the officers, and loud songs and cheers rang through the solitudes of that lonely sea, as each fresh difficulty was mastered, and another mile of casting attained.

On August 8th, when close to Point Pitt, about 120 miles east of Point Barrow, the master, Mr. Court, was sent on shore to place a notice of the "Investigator" having passed, and to erect a cairn. On landing, the boat was met by three Esquimaux, who, although at first extremely timid, gained confidence when the polite and pleasing operation of rubbing noses had been properly gone through in token of friendship.

Through Mr. Mierching, the Moravian missionary, who accompanied the "Investigator" in

the character of interpreter, a communication was readily established with the Esquimaux. These three men were, it appears, a portion of a petty tribe residing in this neighbourhood. The "Investigator" had been first seen by them on the previous night, and as they had never seen anything like her before, she had caused no small sensation in the community, and a general meeting had taken place in consequence. The most astonishing thing of all was, how those "three great trees" (the masts) came to be moving about, and many different opinions were offered. They could give no name to this new wonder but that of "Omiack," the same they give to their large canoes. These three men had been deputed to watch and follow this wonderful Omiack, and they were the men Mr. Court had fallen in with. In reply to the queries made to them, they held out the gratifying promise of a channel of water being found continuously to the east, and that at this season it would vary from three to five miles, the distance the pack then lay off Point Pitt. The ice, they said, never went further off than at the present time, and at one season there was no water at all along the coast. They could give no idea of when the water ceased to exist, or when the winter season may be said to commence in this region.

Communication being established with the tribe generally, some one or two of the men owned to having seen a ship before to the south (the "Plover," no doubt), in Kotzebue Sound. They spoke also of trading with other natives, who gave them Russian articles in exchange for their furs—and promised, if Captain M'Clure would return, to have some skins and ivory ready for him. The tribe generally were a stalwart set, but the men hideously disfigured by the labrets in the lower lip, most of them having two apertures on either side of the mouth, half an inch wide, into which those disgusting ornaments were thrust. The women might have been good looking, according to the standard of thorough-bred Mongolian beauty; they were slightly tattooed about the chin, but it was barely perceptible, any more, it must be added, than the natural colour of their faces, from their want of acquaintance with fresh water. General obesity prevailed in this arctic family, and they seemed to be in possession of stores of meat, as they offered to supply it for barter, if the ship would wait. Thieving, performed in a most artless manner, though not altogether without skill, appeared their principal accomplishment. Whilst Captain M'Clure was giving out some tobacco as a present, he felt a hand in his

trousers' pocket, and on looking down found a native actually, while receiving with one hand, picking his pocket with the other. Yet when detected, the fellow laughed so good-humouredly, and all his compatriots seemed to enjoy the joke so amazingly, that even the aggrieved parties joined in the merriment. In Esquimaux society, this tendency to pocket-picking was evidently considered an amiable weakness. Captain M'Clure told these people that he was looking for a lost brother, and they promised, if they should ever find any white men in distress, to be very kind to them, and "give them deer's flesh." From some of this tribe the fact was gleaned of their having observed Lieutenant Pullen, when, in 1849, he sailed along the coast to the Mackenzie river; and Captain M'Clure also satisfied himself that the "Erebus," or "Terror," had never reached this neighbourhood.

A letter was left with these Esquimaux to be given to any Europeans they might meet with, and they promised faithfully to deliver it, in consideration of the numerous presents they received; but little faith can be placed in such savages, for it was not until May, 1852, when that energetic officer, Captain Maguire, succeeded in opening a communication with them by means of his boats,

that he accidentally observed a small canvass bag, directed, "To the Chief Trader of the Russian Settlements, America," and eventually discovered a remnant of the original document. It only reached England in 1853, after Lieut. Cresswell, who had been sent home by way of Baffin's Bay with despatches, had reported the "Investigator's" safety.

CHAP. VI.

The Narrative of Captain Maguire.—The Esquimaux Report.—The Coast of America in this Region.—The Pack Ice and Floes.—Reach Jones' Island.—Visited by Twenty-four Natives.—Recognition of the Chief.—Simple Cunning of the Savages.—A Fair Malefactor.—Gallantry of the Investigators.—Hazardous and Difficult Navigation.—The Delta of the Mackenzie.—The Ship aground.—Serious Loss of Provisions.

WHILE the good ship is working slowly along the coast, I may take the opportunity of showing how ably her trail was discovered by Capt. Maguire in 1852-3, and by what a faint clue he ascertained the fact of both "Investigator" and "Enterprise" having in successive years been seen by these same savages.

It will be remembered that Captain Maguire, in the "Plover" depôt-ship, succeeded in reaching a more advanced wintering place than Captain Moore had ever been able to attain, and in so doing he arrived at the haunts of the natives seen by Captain M'Clure.

Captain Maguire's admirable narrative, which I have given in the Appendix, is one of the most interesting that has been written upon a winter in the ice; it describes his arrival amongst the Esquimaux, and his preparations for winter; their thievish propensities; his difficulties and noble forbearance. "One day," to use his own words, "returning across the bay to the ship, we were accompanied by a young man and a boy, who talked a great deal more than we could understand; but the former, in explaining to us the sort of tobacco that had been given him on board a ship, *twisted his fingers together so as to describe American twist or negro-head.* This led us to believe that the vessel where he had obtained it might have been the 'Investigator' or 'Enterprise'* when they were leaving the ice this last season. . . . . The two men willingly accompanied us on board, and I was glad to avail myself of Lieutenant Vernon's knowledge of the language to sift the story more thoroughly. He allowed them most patiently to describe all they

* Ships generally carry tobacco in the *leaf* for the use of their crews; but in 1850 manufactured tobacco was adopted in Arctic discovery ships, to economise stowage; and *Cavendish*, or flat compressed slabs; or *negro-head*, or twisted sticks, were supplied by the Admiralty to Captains Collinson and Austin's expedition.

had seen, in their own way, and eventually ascertained that the ship they had been on board of had diagonal* decks, and had an ice-chock† larger than the 'Plover's.' The illuminators in the deck they remarked were square; these are the points that seem to have caught their attention, and these were sufficient to show that they had been on board one or other of the ships; but when the captain was described as wearing spectacles, Captain Collinson was at once identified!

"It is worthy of notice," remarks Capt. Maguire, "that a particular kind of tobacco, with which we knew the 'Enterprise' and the 'Investigator' to have been provided, led to a voluntary description from the Esquimaux of their having boarded a ship, thus affording more information in a few minutes than all our inquiries of the chiefs and others in several months had done;" and had not the expedition of Captain Kellett, by great good fortune, been sent to Melville Island in 1852, against the opinion of many, we should, for our information

* The planking of ships' decks is generally in lines parallel to their keels; but in Arctic ships the doubling is placed diagonally across the original deck, to give a greater degree of strength in the event of being nipped by the ice.

† A strengthening piece of wood, which goes round the ship outside.

concerning the "Investigator," have been mainly indebted to the keenness and skill of Capt. Maguire, and the observation of a savage upon the peculiarity of her tobacco. By this means we attained the certainty of her having passed Point Pitt.

To return to the voyage of the "Investigator." The 9th of August was passed in working against an adverse wind, through very narrow and intricate lanes of water, the ship seldom more than five minutes upon one tack, and so close to the land as to allow the natives to be constantly visiting it, and to ensure a close and careful search for any signs of Franklin's crews having passed.

The coast of America in this neighbourhood is described as one vast plain; the soil as a dark blue clay, without a stone or elevation to break its strange monotony. From the beach the eye ranges over an immense green flat, variegated with moss, grass, and flowers, and broken here and there by fine sheets of fresh water. Large herds of reindeer were seen by the "Investigator," and the whole landscape was strangely novel to our navigators, and totally unexpected in the near neighbourhood of a sea of eternal ice. The bottom of the sea partook of the level nature of the land,

and the soundings were wonderfully regular, enabling the "Investigator" to work along in spite of flying mists, by alternately standing into three fathoms water and off to six or seven, where they generally found the edge of the heavier ice brought up and aground; its enormous thickness may be best estimated by considering that to be aground in seven fathoms water the floes must have ranged from *thirty-five* to *forty* feet in depth, and this, of course, being the outer edge of the pack, was lighter than the rest. In vain, over this vast wild scene of ice, did the aching eyes of the "Investigator's" crew look for one glimmer of a water sky. The natives, whenever they were questioned by Mr. Mierching, told the same tale. They knew of no lands north of them, for it was not possible in their seal-skin kyacks to go far. Sometimes they had been up lanes of water, which formed in the ice, to the North, but never had they been able to advance more than a day and a half's journey (or thirty miles), and this only under the most favourable circumstances. They then came to ice which forbade all further progress. There were, besides, no seals to be seen, and these form, of course, their only inducement for such perilous voyages. This

great ice, which the "Investigator" had afterwards to battle with, appalled even a race whose lives were spent in its neighbourhood.

As they approached the vicinity of the Colville River, its influence became plainly perceptible, in rendering the water brackish and muddy.

Water-fowl, such as the common and King Eider duck, were very numerous, especially in Harrison Bay.

The current hitherto, since rounding Point Barrow, was found to be at the rate of eighteen miles a day in an east by north direction, and it, as well as the smoothness of the narrow lane of water, enabled the "Investigator" to work to windward between thirty and forty miles a day, — a rapid progress for her. Every precaution that the invention or ingenuity of individuals could devise was adopted to ensure, that the fact of the ship having advanced so far, should be made known to those who might hereafter communicate with the natives in the neighbourhood. The name of the ship was stamped upon the knives, and cut with a diamond upon the looking-glasses that were given away; and Captain M'Clure, by way of preventing the people from obliterating the name from the knife-blades by sharpening or polishing them, told

them that the letters there engraved would be a charm to make the hunter fortunate so long as they remained,—one of Dr. Paley's justifiable fibs, that in such a case everyone will allow to have been pardonable.

The temperature of the air and sea water was, on the 11th of August, and had been for some days, strikingly equable. The former ranged about 34°+Fah. in the shade, and the latter 33°+Fah.; this may be regarded as the height of summer in Harrison Bay, out of which they had just worked. They reached Jones' Island in lat. 70° 33′ N., and long. 150° 16′ W. of Greenwich; and, as they approached it, the officer of the watch reported a spar erected as if for a signal, and considerable anxiety was felt until Mr. Court went to examine it, and reported it to be merely a piece of drift-wood forced into that position by the pressure of the ice. The beaches here were found strewed with drift-wood, and one spar was observed which was as large as the "Investigator's" main-mast. The centre of Jones' Island was one great swamp, the breeding-place of large flocks of wild-fowl.

On this forenoon they were visited by two baidars, containing twenty-four natives; and it is curious that from the chief having in his possession an old

musket with the date, "1840, Barnet," marked on the lock, we are able to trace the fact that this man and his people hunt over the ground from Point Barrow, thus far to the eastward: for it was this very man with whom Capt. Maguire had such difficulty, as he mentions in his narrative (given in the Appendix), and there is little doubt that it was he who headed the attack on Lieut. Pullen in 1849. However, he was civil enough now, and both he and his compatriots made a most favourable impression on Capt. M'Clure. "The size of the vessel," he says, "and particularly that of the *large handkerchiefs*, the sails, excited their admiration; the whale-boats, as coming more within the grasp of their conception, were much admired; and they expressed curiosity to know where trees fit to make such boats out of, grew, believing, as they did, that they were in one piece, and merely hollowed out." They readily parted with whatever fish and wild-fowl they had, in barter for tobacco, and offered, if Capt. M'Clure would stay, to bring abundance of venison, which they had in store upon the main. The currency of this region is tobacco, and Capt. M'Clure became his own Master of the Mint, by cutting the sticks into pieces about three inches long, and paying with them as he thought just. An

amusing instance was noticed on this occasion of the cunning of these savages. One of them having observed that every fish was paid for by one piece of tobacco, with a view of increasing his profits cut his fish into pieces, and with barefaced assurance proposed that he should be paid the same amount of tobacco for each portion that he had been paid for the whole. The joke afforded great amusement amongst the crew of the "Investigator," and the fellow himself seemed to enter into the fun when he found his *ruse* unsuccessful. Another party of natives, in the course of the same day, succeeded in obtaining an interview from the "Investigator," by hanging out the rather original ensign of a pair of seal-skin trousers from the top of a pole. After exchanging the usual signs of peace, by holding up hands on either side, and by a general chorus of Timouh! or Peace, the more affectionate salutation of rubbing noses was gone through, and cheerfully too, for these Esquimaux, wonderful to state, happened to be, this time, pleasantly clean. Through the aid of Mr. Miercking, the natives informed the Investigators that they had never before seen a European, and they promised to take care of any who should ever come that way. The people barter their furs with the natives westward of them for

Russian products; but, remote as they are, few articles ever reach them, for even a knife was an object of the greatest possible delight and wonder. Their summer residence and hunting-grounds were on the sterile islands lying off the coast; their winter lodges were a short distance inland upon the main. The tendency to theft was the prevailing vice among them, as usual with all savages who for the first time see such incalculable wealth, in the shape of wood and iron, thrown almost into their possession; and the same may be said of all the tribes the "Investigator" fell in with along this coast. Even after receiving the most lavish supply of presents, and when apparently unable to express all their delight and gratitude, the temptation of any loose article was too great for their honesty. Nothing ever was "too hot or too heavy" for them. On the 12th, for instance, whilst every kindness was being shown to a party of men and women, one of the ladies contrived to secrete under her ample proportions a couple of iron winch-handles and a small ice-anchor: she settled over them like a hen over a nest of eggs, but the ends of one of the handles peeped out, and a lynx-eyed corporal of Marines detected what would, in those regions, have been a serious loss. The fair delinquent, when

taxed with the offence, and upbraided in that rough but energetic language which seamen believe must be understood from pole to pole, pointed at her husband, and evinced a wish that he should share in the responsibility. Of course gallantry was at a high pitch amongst a crew who had left all womankind behind them so many months since, and might shortly again do so for a length of time painful to contemplate; but it is amusing, in reading over the journals of the officers, on the same page with the above anecdote, to find such a passage as the following:—"These children of nature, inhabitants of one of her most desolate regions, appeared free from vice! and evinced the liveliest marks of gratitude for the trifling presents we made them!" How much such amiable forbearance, even in the passing of judgment upon these creatures, tells us of the tender-heartedness of this body of resolute men! They found a pleasure even in communicating with the veriest savages on earth as a relief to the monotony of the voyage, and probably the anticipation of success already threw its sunshine over everything they saw.

These interviews with the natives formed now the only breaks to the daily routine, beyond the general satisfaction felt, when, every day at noon,

the master reported so many more miles achieved to the eastward.

On August 14th, the "Investigator" had reached long. 148° 17′ W., and became much hampered amongst the low, and, for a ship in thick weather, dangerous islands which line the coast in this neighbourhood. They had now passed the Return Reef of Sir John Franklin, the spot from whence he bore up, in 1826, after his unsuccessful attempt to reach Behring's Straits from the Mackenzie River; and they might be said to be nearing the delta of that great stream.

The navigation, always most anxious work for the responsible officers, now became, if possible, still more so. Hazardous shoals were in some places hidden by floes which had run over them; in others, the soundings altered so abruptly as to deceive the most careful. Sudden and dense fogs, with changeable and sometimes rapid currents, all tended to give the commander and master every cause to be watchful. The shoals lining this American Tendra are of the same character, Capt. M'Clure assures us, as those at the mouths of many large rivers in various parts of the world, and which are especially remarked by Wrangel as lying off the mouths of the great Asiatic streams that debouch into the

Arctic Sea. They are composed purely of drift-wood and the alluvial deposits of neighbouring rivers. A mass of the former takes the ground, or becomes fixed by some accident, in three or four fathoms water; the current soon feels the impediment, and begins to deposit, in and around the nucleus, matter that forms a shoal; the shoal grows rapidly, more drift-wood grounds, more sediment is deposited, and even within the lifetime of a man, as one Esquimaux assured Mr. Mierching, an island rises from the bottom of the sea.

After one or two narrow escapes on the 14th of August, the "Investigator" found herself quite beset with these shoals; and at last, in trying to escape through a narrow three-fathom channel, she unfortunately took the ground; a press of canvass was at first carried, in the hope of dragging her through it, but that proved to be hopeless; a kedge-anchor was next laid out, but it, as well as a stream one and chain, failed to heave the vessel afloat. No time was now to be lost; the boats were got out, all the deck-load of provisions embarked in them, some tons of fresh water were started from the tanks in her hold, the anchors lowered into cutters, and then, on a fresh attempt, the "Investigator" was got afloat, after being aground

for five hours. Unfortunately, the ship being obliged to carry canvass to get into deep water, one of the boats laden with provisions capsized whilst in tow, and eleven casks of salt-meat were lost—a real calamity to men under their circumstances.

CHAP. VII.

A Thunder-storm. — Slow Progress. — Signs of the near Approach of Winter. — Going ahead again. — The Ship runs into a Trap in the Main Pack. — Works out again. — Commander Pullen and a Boat's Crew pass without being seen. — Land at Point Warren. — Hostile Reception. — Reconciliation.

THE 15th of August was a lost day; and, entangled by shoals and ice, the vessel had to anchor off Yarborough Inlet, to avoid again getting ashore. In the evening came a westerly wind, and with it a hope of release from the dispersing of the ice, which shut up all the navigable channels; but it was attended by a phenomenon rarely witnessed by an Arctic navigator — namely, a thunder-storm.

"The west wind," writes Captain M'Clure, "was ushered in with rain, and *thunder* and *lightning*. The two latter, I never before witnessed in such a latitude (70° N.). The thermometer rose to 45° + Fahrenheit, and the air was quite sultry, with dark heavy clouds rising overhead, resembling those seen in a thunder-storm in our

own country. The packed ice to-day," he continues, "as far as the eye can reach, appears solid and heavy, without a drop of water discernible. The refraction has been considerable, giving to the edge of the pack the appearance of a continuous line of chalk cliffs, from forty to fifty feet in height. From the light shady tint which in different parts of the pack is distinctly visible, I should be inclined to think that there may be many of the same kind of islands as those we have met with, extending to the northward, and impeding the progress of the ice, thereby keeping this sea eternally frozen."

Scarcely any progress could be made on the 16th or 17th, though the men worked hard and incessantly,—now towing, now warping, and, when any wind served, pressing the old craft to her work until the bells in the ship rang again with the concussion of her bows against the floating masses of ice.

An attempt to catch fish with the seine upon one of the shoals, by a party of volunteers, proved abortive, nothing but drift-wood repaying them for their industry; and on the night of the 17th the surface of the sea was seen, for the first time this season, to have a coating of ice formed over it. The fact was observed and remarked upon by all:

it told of the near approach of winter, with all its disagreeables, and caused some, who had limited their aspirations for this year to the Mackenzie River, to question if they should even reach so far.

On the 18th, the "Investigator" made some progress, and passed Flaxman's Island. She was now fairly about to cross the large angle formed by the mouth of the Mackenzie River; and, affected no doubt by its influence, the main packed ice was found more slack and more remote from the coast.

Tempted by what seemed a sea of water, the "Investigator" ran off, steering a N.E. course for Banks' Land; a slight pitching motion, the first they had felt for some time, leading to the hope of large water. The rapid deepening of the sea, too, during the first watch, from nine to thirty-two fathoms, likewise strengthened their hopes; and darkness and a thick fog hid the reality from their eyes.

August the 19th came, with a fresh westerly breeze, snow squalls, and mist; and in happy ignorance they rattled on, sighting every now and then what looked like the pack edge, or tumbling into bights of ice, where there was no way out but by returning for a while upon their footsteps. At noon they sounded in 195 fathoms without bottom; and shortly afterwards the disagreeable

fact of the "Investigator" having run into a trap in the main pack pressed itself on the mind of the captain. Ice, of stupendous thickness, and in extensive floes, some seven or eight miles in extent, were seen on either hand; the surface of it not flat, such as we see it in Baffin's Strait and the adjacent seas, but rugged with the accumulated snow, frost, and thaws of centuries. Ninety miles had they run into a blind lead in this dangerous ice; and if the wind should shift and the ice close, the position of the ship would be critical indeed. Captain M'Clure now hauled to the southward, working against the wind, which freshened and forced him at one time to carry double-reefed topsails.

Next day a distant view of the Buckland Mountains was obtained, and the ship had eventually to retrace her steps seventy miles to the southward, before she was safe from the jaws of the pack,—an escape which all were truly grateful for, there being no two opinions in the ship as to what would have been their fate had the ice closed upon them.

On the 21st August, the sea was sufficiently clear within the pack to allow the "Investigator" to steer a course outside the Pelly Islands, which lie off the mouth of the Mackenzie River, and fifty

miles distant from the mainland. At 10 A.M. the ship passed distinctly athwart the stream of the Mackenzie, overrunning the sea water. The temperature of the water rose from 28°+ to 31°+ Fahrenheit. The colour of it was as muddy as the Thames at Woolwich, and the taste only slightly brackish. The depth of water being but four fathoms warned Captain M'Clure that he must not attempt to approach the mainland any closer, anxious as he was to do so.

Little did Captain M'Clure or his gallant companions imagine that on that 22nd August the boat's crew of Commander Pullen was only a few miles off, on their return homeward from a visit to Cape Bathurst; but such are the unavoidable accidents of Arctic service. The two following extracts from Captain M'Clure and Lieut. Pullen's journals will, by a reference to the chart, show how near they were to each other.

M'Clure on the 22nd, P.M., and going eastward, observes Richard's Island bearing S.E. by E. ½ E. to N.N.E. ½ E.

On the 23rd August, in the morning, Lieut. Pullen was steering for Richard's Island, and in the course of the day he coasted along its northern shore, on his way to the Mackenzie River. Can a

more convincing proof be given of the difficulty of meeting in Polar seas? For, be it remembered, both officers knew of the importance attached to communication between parties employed upon such service; and therefore certainly did their best to pass nothing unseen. Perhaps, however, it was as well for the future fame of the British navy, that Captain M'Clure did not meet Lieut. Pullen; as the latter's unfavourable report of what an ice-encumbered sea he had seen from Cape Bathurst might have induced Captain M'Clure to adopt some other course instead of the one he did.

After passing the Pelly Islands, whales were again seen for the first time since they left Point Barrow—the ice-master, however, said they were small, and not worth much to fishermen, either in bone or oil.

On the 24th August, observing some native huts near Point Warren on the eastern shore of the Mackenzie, the ship hauled in for them, and Captain M'Clure landed with the hope of inducing some of the natives to carry to the Hudson Bay Company's posts, intelligence of his having passed; for the voyagers were now fairly within the limits of a region whereon, it was to be expected, the civilising influence of that wealthy company of monopolisers

might be perceptible. Hitherto, they had been coasting along *Russian America*; but now *British America* had been entered upon.

But the reception of the Investigators by their Esquimaux fellow-subjects of Queen Victoria denoted anything but confidence in white men. Two of them yelled and shouted, waving a knife in declaration of war, and threatening even with bow and arrow. Every method which had hitherto been considered of avail in propitiating the goodwill of Esquimaux, was made in vain, until at last Mr. Mierching, attired as one of themselves, succeeded in assuring them of the good intentions of their visitors, and that they neither contemplated robbing nor murdering them, — a pleasant contingency which they evidently considered likely to arise on a visit from "Kabloonas," or white men. Confidence had only just been established, when suddenly a couple of muskets were espied in the hands of the boat's crew, and thereupon all the fury of the new acquaintances burst out afresh; nothing appeased them until the muskets were sent back to the boats. It appeared that, when the vessel was first seen in the morning, all the natives had decamped with their baidars and household gods, leaving only the chief and his son, who had bravely refused

to fly, and remained to defend a sick youth and the encampment. This invalid soon made his appearance with his mother; and Dr. Armstrong kindly sought to give the poor creature such aid as was in his power; but it was too late, his foot was evidently in an advanced state of mortification, and death must have soon come to put him out of his misery.

Through the interpreter they learnt that this tribe was at war with its neighbours, and had no communication with the Indians of the Mackenzie River. Their barter or trade was carried on, after the sea froze over, by crossing to the western shore, and meeting the natives seen by the Investigators on her road hither. The chief recognised the name of one of the petty chiefs Mr. Mierching had met, and said, with some degree of pride, "Ah, he was a great chief! He should," he added, "see Attauwoo very soon," and he had a quantity of blubber and whalebone to barter with the western people, for his people had killed three whales in the present season. When asked why they did not trade with the white men up the big river, the reply was, they had given the Indians a water which had killed a great many of them and made others foolish, and they did not want to have any of it!

From this tribe Captain M'Clure heard of two boats having been to Cape Warren from the westward, and having returned again; and he was for some time rather puzzled at a story they told him, of a white man having been killed and buried in this neighbourhood. To the inquiry of when it had taken place, all that could be learnt was, that "it might have been last year, or perhaps when the narrator was a child"! an Esquimaux mode of dealing with dates not a little perplexing.*

Although the natives offered to show where this body was interred, it was not until next day that circumstances admitted of an examination being made in the locality pointed out; and then it was without any success, although the ruined remains of a couple of drift-wood huts, so well described by Sir John Richardson in his journey through Prince Rupert's Land, were there to excite curiosity and afford grounds for conjecture.

* There is every reason to believe that this story referred to the death and burial of a man near this place, in one of Sir John Richardson's early journeys from the Mackenzie to the Coppermine River. Captain M'Clure, not having been supplied with the needful books on Arctic Discovery, was not aware of this circumstance.

CHAP. VIII.

Approach to Cape Bathurst.—Whale-fishing of the Natives.—Celebration of their Victories over the Leviathan.—Esquimaux Charmers.—The Joys of Cape Bathurst.—The Land of the White Bear.—An Esquimaux Swindler.—Mode of settling Quarrels.—Judicious Missionaries desirable for these People.—Admirable Qualifications of Mr. Miercking.

The 26th and 27th of August, 1850, were spent in making the best of their way from Cape Warren to Port Dalhousie, the vessel being kept as near to the land as the soundings would admit of, which was not nearer than two miles. Captain M'Clure would have sent a boat to render the search more perfect; but the incessant mists and variable weather made it hardly prudent to detach any of the men, with the possibility of their being misled. The extent of open water off the land seemed to increase as they approached Cape Bathurst; but the floes that were found floating about in it were of great magnitude, and gave much trouble occasionally in keeping the ship clear of them. The nights were closing perceptibly; and from per-

petual day they had now three hours of perfect darkness, during which time guns and rockets were occasionally fired, in case any of Franklin's expedition, or the "Enterprise," might be near. Arriving off the western entrance of Liverpool Bay, Captain M'Clure was very anxious to run into it, in order that he might form an idea of its fitness for winter quarters; the probable necessity for which, with due forethought, he felt it right to keep in mind. For as yet, along the whole extent of the American coast that he had traversed since leaving Behring's Strait, not a harbour had been found. The shallow and intricate navigation of the mouth of the Mackenzie River forbade his thinking of bearing up for it at any time; and he saw full well that to winter off such a coast, with the possibility of the whole weight of the northern ice setting down on it during November and December gales, would be certain destruction. Liverpool Bay, however, was as shoal as the rest; and the "Investigator" pushed on, trusting to Providence to find a safe spot when the winter came. Indeed, some already talked of not wintering at all; and the more sanguine pointed out that they were close upon the longitude of Melville Island, a place reached by Parry from the opposite direc-

tion. Crossing Liverpool Bay, and seeing several whales, some large, but the majority small, they reached Cape Bathurst on the 31st of August. The depth of water near the land allowed a nearer approach by the ship; and it is generally described as exhibiting, along the coast, blue clay cliffs about thirty feet perpendicular, having on their surface a good depth of rich black mould resembling bog-earth. A fine plain rolled away into the interior, rich in hypoborean plants, and abounding in reindeer, whilst, apart from whales, there were seen at several places positive proofs of fish having been plentiful as well as wild-fowl. At and about Cape Bathurst, Captain M'Clure made a final effort to communicate his position to the Hudson Bay posts, through the Esquimaux, who are there particularly numerous.

Aided by Mr. Mierching as interpreter, and by the favourable impression which Sir John Richardson's visit to them in 1848 had made, the intercourse with this tribe, numbering three hundred souls, was extremely interesting. Even a few women who first met the Investigators showed no signs of mistrust, but cordially welcomed them, and volunteered to show the way to their companions. Captain M'Clure describes them as an extremely

fine-looking body of men and women; many of the latter indeed were, according to his account, exceedingly pretty. Healthy, well fed, and well clothed, they seemed to lack nothing; and their intelligence, courage, and good-natured confidence in the men and officers won everybody's good-will.

The chief promised to convey the letter to a tribe that communicated with our posts on the "Big River;" they themselves bartering with an intervening race, probably Louchoux Indians.

As far as could be gleaned, they would proceed south for the latter purpose in about three weeks' time, leaving only a few men and most of the women to winter at Cape Bathurst. Whaling was at present their object; and their mode of killing those leviathans was primitive enough.

An *Oomaiak*, or women's boat, is *manned* by ladies, having as harpooner a chosen man of the tribe; and a shoal of small fry, in the form of *Kyacks*, or single-men canoes, are in attendance. The harpooner singles out a fish, and drives into its flesh this weapon, to which an inflated seal-skin is attached by means of a walrus-hide thong. The wounded fish is then incessantly harassed by the men in the kyacks with weapons of a similar description, a number of which, when attached to the

whale, baffle its efforts to escape, and wear out its strength, until, in the course of a day, the whale dies from sheer exhaustion and loss of blood.

The harpooner, after a successful day's sport, is a very great personage, and invariably decorated with the Esquimaux order of the Blue Ribbon; that is, he has a blue line drawn across his face over the bridge of his nose. This is the highest honour known to the heroes of Cape Bathurst; but to it is attached also the happy privilege of the decorated individual being allowed to take unto himself a second wife. Great orgies occur upon such occasions; and, if all tales be true, it is to be feared that morality is at rather a low ebb in these latitudes, and that Byron's theory concerning cold climates and chastity is not always supported by fact. These "children of nature" stole, of course, when the chance offered, like their brethren farther west; and the thieves were generally of the fair sex: it appeared to be a sort of tax which they levied upon the amused, and, in some cases, admiring seamen. When they came to pay a visit to the ship, they were soon quite at their ease, and having carried up their light canoes and deposited them on deck, they ranged about full of astonishment and curiosity; the pictures and look-

ing-glasses in the officers' cabins being especial objects of admiration. They then had a dance with the crew, and invited them ashore; and charming young ladies, with brightest of eyes and whitest of teeth, assured their admirers that all the night of the 31st of August they had been expected. Venison had been roasted, whale stewed, and other racy and tempting delicacies prepared. We have been assured that some of the men, in the solitudes of Banks Land, often looked back to this oasis of Cape Bathurst with a sigh, and would have exchanged, for the certainty of existence there, the uncertain prospect of a return to Europe. Cape Bathurst was to the "Investigator," in her long voyage, what Otaheite was in the olden day to our early circumnavigators. The skill in delineating the outlines of the coast, or chart-drawing, which has been so often mentioned by navigators as existing amongst the Esquimaux, was really found here; but nothing could be learnt of what lay to the North. They did not know whether it was sea or not; but they said, pointing to it with an expression of anxiety, "That is the Land of the White Bear!" They appeared to be much alarmed, too, when the ship for a time stood off towards it. The bears they described as coming from it were said

to be very fierce and dangerous; and one of the women, with tears in her eyes, told how lately one of those brutes had carried off her child when playing on the beach at a short distance from her. Even those whom superior weapons rendered fearless of bears, could not but enter into the feelings of superstitious awe, with which the Esquimaux pointed at that vast and mysterious sea of ice, which lay away to the north-west; a sea which ship could not sail through, nor man traverse. "Rightly," says Captain M'Clure, "did they call it the Land of the White Bear." A constant traffic in the exchange of garments went on between the seamen and officers on the one side and the natives on the other; but one individual, more knowing than the rest, hit upon an ingenious plan to obtain clothing without giving a *quid pro quo*. He went to several individuals of the "Investigator's" company, commencing with the commander, and pretended to be suffering from excessive cold. His teeth chattered and his whole frame shook so, that compassion was immediately aroused, and a Guernsey frock given him; then he felt better, but, watching an opportunity, the rogue would slip it off, stow it away in his kyack, and then return to pigeon a fresh hand. At last, however, an old quarter-master, who had

been watching him with some degree of amusement, flew into a passion at the fellow trying the same trick on with him, called him "*a Jew*," and threatened to knock his head off, accompanying his threat with a demonstration from a large horny fist, which the Esquimaux understood better than the profuse volley of adjectives that rolled out at the same time over the quarter-master's quid.

With regard to the story told of a white man being buried at Cape Warren, they merely said they knew nothing of it, or of the natives residing there; indeed, they were at variance with them. They appeared to have no idea of any religious ceremonies, and knew of no Supreme Being. They were generally happy, and agreed well together in their tribe; and when any quarrel did occur, they only packed up their goods and quitted the community, settling somewhere else on the coast.

If a mortal grudge should arise, a thing of rare occurrence, the aggrieved party, concealing his passion, waited quietly for an opportunity of revenge; and, when it offered, he killed his enemy. No retaliation took place at the time; but some one of the murderer's family eventually atoned for the deed, the actual perpetrator, however, often escaping. Such was the principal information

gleaned from these people. A despatch was left with them, which has not yet come to hand; but they promised to be kind to any strangers, "white men," who might come amongst them; a promise that they appeared likely to keep from interested, if not from better motives.

No apology need be given for relating what little is known of these interesting arctic fishermen—cut off from civilisation by a dreary wilderness but seldom traversed—hemmed in by a brutal and blood-thirsty race which not all the romantic fiction of a Fennimore Cooper can redeem from the curse of all Christian men, and wandering along the farthest shores of a territory farmed to a company of furriers (the Hudson's Bay Company) whose dividends depend upon the race of beasts being multiplied rather than that of men. We shall probably not hear much more of these poor creatures now that, for a while at least, there is a lull in arctic exploration; and we cannot take leave of them without echoing a wish continually expressed throughout Captain M'Clure's Journal:—"Would that some practically Christian body, such as the Moravian Mission, could send a few of their brethren amongst the tribes of Esquimaux who wander along the Polar Sea, to carry to them the

arts and advantages of civilised life, and trust to God, in his own good time, showing them the way of eternal life." Such men as Mr. Miercking would in a few years perfectly revolutionise this docile and intelligent race. He was, as I have said, a native of Saxony, and had for many years been a missionary in Labrador. Nothing came amiss to this valuable person; he could make a pair of shoes, or crochet an antimacassar, build a house of mud or wood,—or sing a song and play the guitar. He was strong in frame, and cheerful and contented under all circumstances, perhaps partly because he had always been accustomed to a life of trial. Such a man as this is worth a hundred of the pretenders to piety who have fallen, like locusts, on the loaves and fishes of many of the races of uncivilised man, under the plea of "plucking brands from the burning!"

CHAP. IX.

Cape Bathurst left.—Fires observed on Shore — prove to be Volcanoes.—Cape Parry reached.—New Land discovered. —Possession taken in the Queen's Name.—The "Investigator" proceeds on a North-easterly Course.—Barrow's Strait only Sixty Miles further. — Captain M'Clure's Journal.

September has come. The "Investigator" is pushing ahead, the winds are light as they ever have been since leaving Behring's Strait, except for a few hours when she was entangled in the pack off the Mackenzie River.

From the 1st to the 6th the vessel was rounding the bay formed by Capes Bathurst and Parry; whales were very numerous, no less than fifteen being seen at one time, although none of a large size. The water was deep, eighty-four fathoms (mud) being obtained, only four miles off shore, when at the mouth of the Horton River. On the 4th large fires were seen on shore, and at first supposed to be lighted by the natives to attract attention. As, however, Mr. Mierching questioned such extravagance in fuel being committed by

Esquimaux, on the next day (Sept. 5th), when it happened to be calm with rain, Lieutenant Gurney Cresswell, Doctor Armstrong, and some others were sent to examine the spot.

The fires proved to be volcanic, and issued, in smoke strongly impregnated with sulphur, from fifteen different cone-like apertures resembling lime-kilns. Dr. Armstrong collected a considerable quantity of specimens of earths and minerals, in which the place was rich. The general appearance of the land was flat, though rising in places to an elevation of 300 ft. to 500 ft., and intersected with ravines, exhibiting blue clay. The volcanoes were about fifty feet above water, and situated on an old land-slip, not unlike the undercliff of the Isle of Wight; some pools of water near these volcanic cones were strongly impregnated with copperas; and altogether the testimony of our voyagers would lead us to suppose that the subterranean fires at this spot have a different origin to those found existing here and there, in about the 56th parallel of north latitude, on the western side of the Rocky Mountains, where such fires are generally imputed to the substratum of coal having caught fire by spontaneous combustion.

On September 6th, 1850, Cape Parry was



T. D. Crewswell. del.

Hullmandel & Walton. Lith.

reached, while a fresh breeze was blowing, but with gloomy overcast weather, and the pack extending east and west in a close and heavy body, about three miles off shore. About noon, the sky lifted a little to the northward, and showed high bold land, lying off to north-east, the extremes of its bearing N. by E. and E.N.E. true. It was a first discovery; for hitherto the chart had been a blank in that quarter. This was satisfactory in more ways than one, for it was upon the bearing of Melville Island, and Captain M'Clure knew full well the advantage, and the prospect of reaching it, that was now held out, if the land which he saw was an extensive one.

Land-water had already brought him nearly half-way to Baffin's Bay; next season, if not in this, land-water would enable him to achieve the rest!

A freshening north-east breeze and clear weather, with more open water, enabled the gallant "Investigator" to stretch off from the American continent this night; and the water became more free from ice as they reached under the weather and newly-discovered land; and next day, 7th Sept., at 9.30 A.M. Captain M'Clure landed to take possession of this addition to the realms of his Royal Mistress. A

churlish anonymous writer has blamed him for this; but I think few men would have hesitated to do the same under similar circumstances. The devotion and enterprise, which had brought that company of sixty British seamen so far, was alloyed by no excitement of vanity; there were none but themselves in these wild solitudes to re-echo their cheers; and the loyalty with which they hailed their first addition to Queen Victoria's broad realms, was as sincere as that which had buoyed them up in past difficulties, and cheered and invigorated them for future trials. It was not for them to weigh the value of what they had discovered, it was enough that they had done their duty; and an honest conviction of that fact gladdened officer and man that day as they stood at the cape which marked the half-way of their journey. They might not be the men fated to tell their own tale, and to reap the reward of their toils; but come what might, they trusted that if at some future day their country should learn how honestly they had devoted their lives to her glory, she would not fail to do honour to their memory. Such were the high and ennobling thoughts which filled the hearts of the humblest of that little band: well might their leader feel proud of them, and they of

him; and both may well despise any attempt to rob them of this honest fame, or sneer at their just enthusiasm. They christened the Land "Baring Island," after the then first Lord of the Admiralty, Sir Francis Baring, under the supposition, afterwards found erroneous, that it was not connected with Banks Land. The headland they were standing upon is a remarkably striking one, full 1000 feet high, and of a castellated appearance; this was appropriately named after Lord Nelson, who, as a dead hero, has not been sufficiently remembered by modern naval discoverers.

Having a southern aspect, the vegetation, for this latitude, was somewhat abundant, and the arctic flora was seen in perfection. Recent traces of reindeer and hares were a satisfactory sight to the Investigators; and some wild geese were soaring over head. The ice which was beginning to make in the pools and on the land had sent the ducks to milder regions southward; but that they came here in large numbers in the summer months was very evident.

Better than all, too — for who was then going to contemplate wintering there? — from a considerable elevation, which as they guessed, embraced forty miles of horizon to the north-east, the

sea was more open and free from ice. Oh! for a fair wind! was the exclamation that burst from all lips.

The vessel was now worked along to the north-east, against a moderate east wind, with weather alternately foggy and fine.

The coast of Baring Land, as they advanced, showed out point after point; the outline generally picturesque, and sloping to the sea. Limestone prevailed in its structure, but as yet covered with a considerable amount of verdure.

Throughout the 8th September, the "Investigator" advanced as rapidly as her speed on a wind would admit of, the soundings varying steadily from nine fathoms to seventy-six fathoms, the bottom a dark mud, and in places yellow clay. The marked continuance of the land began now to lead them to suppose that its connection with Banks Land was possible; and when next day, the 9th, after a shift of wind had enabled the "Investigator" to run awhile upon her course to the north-east, and land showed out on the starboard bow, great anxiety was felt by some, lest they should be running into some deep ford or inlet without an egress into Barrow's Strait.

Should this be the case, they would have to

retrace their steps: but the season for navigation was now to be told in hours, and there was no time for hesitation and doubt; so the land on the starboard bow was at once declared to be another island, and named Prince Albert's Land. Their course lay between them, and was shaped accordingly. The distance between the two lands was conjectured to be thirty miles; and at an equal number of miles from each the "Investigator" held on her way, in spite of fogs and snow squalls. A few gulls and seals were seen, and some ducks flying south,—an unerring signal of the advent of an arctic winter.

"The soundings in midchannel were about 37 fathoms mud," says Captain M'Clure; "and on the evening of the 9th no snow was yet to be seen lying on the adjacent land. On September 10th in a fog, the ship fell in with two islands; and it was afterwards seen that the strait they were going up contracted here to only fourteen miles, and some ice was seen hanging about the western shore.

"Sept. 9th, 1850.—Albert Land, on the starboard hand, exhibited, in its interior, ranges of mountains covered with snow; but the lower grounds were as yet free: here and there peaks of a volcanic character

and outline were seen, but none that appeared active, and the rocks were mostly limestone, as on the western shore." Among the islands gulls still lingered, giving a hope of winter having delayed its arrival; and that arrival was now what the voyagers most feared. They felt as if they would give all they held dear in life for another week of summer. The dangers of the navigation, cold, hunger, and hardship,—all were forgotten. "Only give us time," they said, "and we must make the North-west Passage." At noon the observations placed the "Investigator" only *sixty* miles from Barrow's Strait. "I cannot," writes Captain M'Clure in his private journal, "describe my anxious feelings. Can it be possible that this water communicates with Barrow's Strait, and shall prove to be the long-sought North-west Passage? Can it be that so humble a creature as I am will be permitted to perform what has baffled the talented and wise for hundreds of years! But all praise be ascribed unto Him who hath conducted us so far in safety. His ways are not our ways, or the means that he uses to accomplish his ends within our comprehension. The wisdom of the world is foolishness with Him."

Captain M'Clure, I am sure, need be under no apprehension that his feelings, and those of his

gallant supporters, will not be appreciated without any attempt of mine to detail them. One such paragraph as that above quoted is enough to show how well in that hour of joy, as well as in future ones of anxiety and distress, they both placed their trust where there could be no disappointment. An eloquent tribute to this truly chivalrous dependence upon God and a good cause, has been furnished by a continental writer.* He says, after quoting such a paragraph as the above "le sentiment intime de la Bible si commun aux Anglais, les suit partout ; il les accompagne dans toutes les épreuves, les soutient dans tous les dangers. Quand le Calife Omar brûla la bibliothèque d'Alexandrie, il dit, 'si les livres ne contiennent que le Coran ils sont inutiles, s'ils contiennent autre chose, ils sont de trop sur la terre.' Ainsi les Anglais avec leur Bible, ce livre unique leur suffit : il contient tout. Et quand on les suit dans ces courses héroïques qu'ils font dans les régions inexplorées, on ne peut s'empêcher d'ouvrir avec eux le livre des livres. Ces intrépides pionniers, ces précurseurs de la civilisation qui ouvrent à l'humanité de nouvelles voies, nous apparaissent comme des Moïses qui vont à la conquête de la terre promise."

* M. Lemoine, in *l'Indépendance Belge.*

CHAP. X.

Signs of a rapidly approaching Winter.—Critical Position of the "Investigator."—Made fast to a Floe.—Safe for the Present.—Winter begun.—Winter Clothing.—Driven with the Ice towards Barrow's Strait.—Arduous Toils.—The "Investigator" reaches her most advanced Position.—Beset at Last.—Dangerous Agitation in the Ice.—Preparations for Shipwreck.—Sweeping with the Pack against the Cliffs.—Imminent Peril.—Safe once more.—And stationary.

The 11th September 1850 came in upon the "Investigator," and brought with it the first undoubted signs of winter. The ice, acted upon by a fresh north-west gale had rolled down the strait and beset her, its motion being at times appallingly rapid. The thermometer fell to 21°, or eleven degrees below freezing point; and long dark nights added to the difficulties of navigating in such inclement weather. Harbour or winter quarters fit to secure the ship in, there were none in sight; and if there had been it would have been out of the question as yet to retreat upon one whilst Barrow's Strait was so near at hand.

On the very same day, Captain Austin's expedition, which it will be remembered left England

shortly after Captain M'Clure's did, to reach Melville Island from Baffin's Bay, was overtaken by similar signs of winter off Griffith's Island, the position of the two parties (each ignorant of the other's whereabouts) being about 400 miles in an E.N.E. and W.S.W. direction; and, strangely enough, as showing how much the seasons in the Frigid Zone agree year after year, it was exactly two years anterior, upon that very day (as Captain M'Clure remarks in his Journal), that the expedition of Sir James Ross was frozen in permanently in Leopold Harbour.

The "Investigator's" position was now most critical; for the westerly gales had caught her upon the eastern and lee shore of Prince of Wales Strait, and pressed her, together with the ice with which she was surrounded, down upon that coast. Her only safeguard from destruction, for some time, was in holding on, with strong hawsers and stream chain, to ice-anchors fixed in a heavy floe which, from drawing more water than the ship, served, when it grounded, as a natural dock or break-water for her.

Along the westward side of the strait, the gale caused a fine lane of water to be seen, —a tantalising sight for the imprisoned officers and men! it served,

however, to feed anticipation, and to prevent their leader from thinking of winter quarters.

On the 12th September his Journal is to the following effect:—"The temperature of the water has fallen to 28° Fahr. (freezing point of sea water). The breeze has freshened to a gale, bringing with it snow, and sending down large masses of ice upon us. The pressure is considerable, listing the vessel several degrees. Fortunately a large floe, which was fast approaching the vessel, has had its progress arrested by one extreme of it taking the ground and the other end locking with a grounded floe upon our weather beam. It is thus completely checked, and forms a safe barrier against all further pressure. As the rudder was likely to become damaged, it was unhung and suspended over the stern. We can now do nothing, being regularly beset, but await any favourable change of the ice, which we anxiously look for, knowing that the navigable season for this year has almost reached its utmost limit, and that a few hours of clear water will in all probability solve the long-sought problem as to the practicability of a North-west Passage."

The 13th and 14th September brought no change for the better; the ice, acted upon by winds, tides,

and currents, kept in constant motion outside of the "Investigator" and gave rise to illusory prospects of open water and fair leads. By dint of great labour and watching for favourable opportunities, the ship was gradually warped and hauled about twelve hundred yards farther off shore and to windward.

The temperature of the air fell to 10°+ of Fahr., or 22° below freezing point; the surface of the sea, where free from pack or broken ice, congealed and froze rapidly; the land became hidden under a general covering of snow; the stern reign of an arctic winter had begun.

Winter raiment was now generally adopted; and more than one anxious wish was expressed for some sheltered cove to heave in sight, wherein the risk of being drifted with the pack of Prince of Wales Strait might be avoided.

The likelihood of such an occurrence forced itself disagreeably upon the minds of all, who looked in the direction of the Princess Royal group, and saw those dark cliffs ripping up the ice which rolled down upon them. If, upon the other hand, enchained as the ship was in the pack, she should touch the ground before the adjacent moving body of ice did, it would roll over them,

entailing certain destruction of the ship, and at such a season certainly a great loss of life.

The appearance of a few of the hardier gulls of those regions cheered the men a little; and the captain remarks that the appearance of these birds was a good omen, which he believed to indicate water somewhere near him; and yet he does not deny that every day now lost by the ship being beset added to his intense anxiety. Should he winter in the pack, and even escape shipwreck, he could not tell where he might be drifted to in the coming winter.

On September the 15th, the wind veered a little more to the southward, setting up the strait, and the ice began to drive towards Barrow's Strait, opening a little at the same time. All hands were set to work, of course, to reach the largest spaces of water in sight; and this labour was pursued even during the night, the men in the dark leaping and carrying the hawsers from piece to piece of ice, trusting to its white glimmer to see their road and secure a footing. It was satisfactory to find themselves drifting along in a churning sea of ice, amid darkness and snow storm, so that it was to the north-east; but the sudden variations of the soundings which the men in the chains called out,

sometimes as little as five fathoms water only, and then off again to twenty, reminded them of how perilous was the course they were pursuing.

On the 16th September, they still made slow progress towards Barrow's Strait, and on the 17th September, 1850, reached their most advanced position in lat. 73° 10′ N., and long. 117° 10′ W., about *thirty miles* from the waters of that series of straits which, under the names of Melville, Barrow, and Lancaster, communicate with Baffin's Bay. At this tantalising distance, the ship ceased to drift, and the ice appeared to have reached a point beyond which some unknown cause would not allow it to proceed. The heavy pack of Melville Strait lying across the head of the channel, was supposed to be the reason of the ice of Prince of Wales Strait ceasing to move on to the north-east; and the impassable nature of the pack in the same direction, in the following year, confirmed this hypothesis. On that day (the 19th Sept. 1850), Captain M'Clure tells us, he debated in his mind whether to abandon all hope of reaching Barrow's Strait that year, and retrace his steps southward in search of a wintering place, or to hold on, so far as he might, and run the risk of wintering in the pack. "I decided," he says,

"upon the latter of these two courses;" and the consideration which influenced him in this difficult choice was, "that to relinquish the ground obtained through so much labour and anxiety, for the remote chance of finding safe winter quarters, would be injudicious, thoroughly impressed as I was with the absolute importance of retaining every mile, to insure any favourable results while navigating these seas." Besides this, it was desirable to hold as advanced a position as possible, in order that the spring sledge-parties which he contemplated despatching in 1851, should be at once set to work upon new and unsearched coast lines. To winter voluntarily in the pack was now as confidently decided upon as if arctic authorities had never said that such an attempt would result in certain destruction; and that same reliance upon an over-ruling Providence, which had carried them successfully so far, cheered them in the anxieties which their novel experiment gave rise to. The smallest pools of water now became rapidly covered with new-formed ice; the eider duck, the hardiest and strongest-winged of the feathered tribe which visits the Polar Seas, were last seen on the 23rd September; and the temperature of the air fast verged towards the zero of Fahrenheit.

Although the ice had formed round the ship, and the pack was re-cemented to a certain degree, still it was far from quiescent. Sometimes a pressure would take place upon opposite sides of the body, which was still detached from the coast of Banks Land as well as the opposite shore, the sheets of young ice would crack across, and one part overrun the other with a sharp chirping noise, which reverberated through the frosty air; at another time some huge field of ice, which from its great depth was much more acted upon by the tides or currents than its neighbours, would rush with fearful velocity through the lighter ice, turning up everything that came in its way, and giving rise to fears lest such a moving field should touch and sink the ship. At another time the whole body of the pack, acted upon by north-east winds, would sweep gradually southward and towards the shoals and cliffs of Princess Royal Island: indeed at one time the "Investigator" drifted twenty-four miles south in three days. They had fortunately laid hold of a large piece of ice which grounded upon the shoals westward of Princess Royal Island; and there the ship held on under its lee, for security, as the rest of the ice swept by her. Some idea of the strain upon the ship, as

well as the desperate position she was in, may be gleaned by the fact, that at one time she was in five fathoms water, and trusting for safety to every available hawser in the vessel, amounting in the aggregate to a thirty-one inch hemp cable and a stream-chain in addition, yet she was every minute expecting to part, as the pressure took her broad bow, or surged against her trembling sides.

Anticipating the worst that could occur, Captain M'Clure ordered a large quantity of provisions and fuel to be placed upon deck, the officers and men to be carefully told off to their boats, and every one to have his appointed place and duty in the event of a final catastrophe; tents and warm clothing were also prepared, and every precaution taken to save life, even if it were beyond human power to save the ship. On the 27th September, the temperature being then at zero, and the ice, as they fancied, stationary, after the "Investigator" had drifted ten miles south of the Princess Royal Island, preparations were commenced for housing the vessel over, and otherwise securing her crew from the intense cold and inclemency of a winter which was well nigh upon them. The officers had just time to congratulate themselves upon the escape from past dangers, and to

express thankfulness at having only lost thirty miles of latitude by the drifting of the pack, when a change of wind set it all again in motion. The 28th was spent in breathless anxiety, as, helpless in their icy trammels, they swept northward again towards the cliffs of Princess Royal Island. These cliffs rose perpendicularly from the sea at the part against which the ship appeared to be setting, and as the crew eyed them for a hope of safety, if the good craft should be crushed against their face, they could see no ledge upon which even a goat could have established a footing; and an elevation of 400 feet precluded a chance of scaling them: to launch the boats over the moving pack was their sole chance, and that a poor one, rolling and upheaving as it was under the influence of wind, tide, and pressure.

It is in such an emergency that discipline, and a certainty that each would perform unflinchingly his duty, as well as the innate good qualities of our noble seamen, are best exhibited. Dastards would in such circumstances have deserted their ship; but the Investigators were made of different stuff; they knew too that One who is "strong to save" was watching over them, and they eyed the bleak cliffs, which in a few minutes might be

frowning over their graves, with the calm courage of resolute men. A finer picture than such a scene presented can hardly be imagined, and it was one repeatedly exhibited during this wonderful voyage; but it would be an almost hopeless attempt to convey to the reader — by mere description — an adequate idea either of the scenery so replete with the grim terrors of the polar regions or of the moral grandeur of self-devotion in the officers and men. "It looks a bad job this time!" inquiringly remarked one of the sailors as he assisted another old sea-dog in coiling down neatly a frozen hawser. "Yes!" was the rejoinder, as the other shaded his eyes from the driving snow, and cast a glance at the dark cliff looming through the storm, "the old craft will double up like an old basket when she gets alongside of them rocks!"

The "Investigator's" hour was not yet come, however; and when within 500 yards of the rocks, the ice *coach-wheeled* her along them, and finally swept her past the islands upon the eastern side.

No water was in sight from the mast-head; yet onwards they drifted slowly, and on September 30th became again stationary in lat. 72° 50′ N., and long. 117° 55′ W., very nearly as far north as they had sailed a fortnight before.

CHAP. XI.

Severe Pressure on the Ice.—Dangerous Nips.—Farewell to the Sun.—Housing the Vessel.—Good Health and Spirits of the Men.—Five Hundred Pounds of Meat found to be Putrid.—Winter Rambles on the Ice.—Perils arising in some of these.—An Excursion to view the North-west Passage.—Hard Labour and Insufficient Food.—Suffering from Thirst.—The Passage seen.—Captain M'Clure lost for a Night.—Return of the Party to the Ship.—Success of Measures taken for the Health of the Crew.

On the first week in October a change of the moon occasioned spring-tides, which of course led to considerable motion in the ice; but that motion manifested itself in the shape of severe pressure and *nips*, there being no water of sufficient space to allow the pack to drift either north or south. On the occasion of one of these nips, the "Investigator" was thrown much over to the starboard side, and lifted two feet out of water by the ice pressing under her keel; every timber in the vessel cracked and groaned, and the bells began to ring as she surged and trembled under the shock. There needed no boatswain's pipe to bring all hands upon

deck; and there, in an October night, with the temperature thirty-six degrees below freezing point, each man stood at his station, expecting a final catastrophe to the ship, and that they should themselves be left upon the surface of the frozen strait, to fare as best they might. Magnificent auroras lit up the heavens more than once about this time, and generally appeared most brilliant in its southern region. The pale sun swept, it is true, across the sky, in a daily-diminishing arch; but his rays had ceased to give warmth, and the tiniest crystals of snow withstood his power. Light, however, he still gave for a while; and all looked upon him as a friend for whose speedy return they should soon have to pray, that they might be released from the nine long months of solitary imprisonment now to begin.

The housing was spread over the vessel, and the curtains nailed down to the gunwale upon the northern side, to shield the men from the cutting blasts of that quarter; but to the southward every precaution was taken to enjoy the sun's light as long as possible. The fact of life and light being almost synonymous terms was deeply impressed upon the mind of Captain M'Clure; and to his constant remembrance of it we must in a great

measure impute the extraordinary exemption of his crew from scurvy.

They, as well as the officers, appeared now to be in the best health and spirits; and there were only two out of the body upon the doctor's sick list on the 6th October.

Every evening after work was over, the after part of the lower deck was converted into a temporary stage, on which the "clever dogs" of the crew performed, danced, sang, or recited, for for the amusement of those who were less accomplished; and the roars of laughter and light-hearted jokes, passing among them, bore good evidence that neither nips, frostbites nor hair-breadth escapes, preyed upon the spirits of any of the audience.

On examining some canisters of preserved meat, Captain M'Clure found, much to his chagrin, that no less than 500 lbs. was so putrid as to necessitate its being thrown overboard, a loss mainly occasioned by fractures made in the tins when packing them in England. Greatly did Captain M'Clure lament this additional diminution of his resources; for it will be remembered a boat-load of meat had already been lost when the ship was a-ground off Point Manning. He consoled himself, however,

with the hope that a certain surplus, which the contractor had promised to put on board to cover such contingencies, would replace this unfortunate deficit.

Amongst the preparations made for the worst that could befall the ship, there is one which will strike every one as evincing carefulness and skill, and at the same time it will show how critical the position of the vessel must have been. This was the blasting with gunpowder, and the employment of manual labour, to remove all the hummocks and inequalities upon the surface of the ice upon one side of the vessel, in order that a smooth surface might be ready to receive her, as there was a probability of her being thrown upon the ice. Nothing can better bring home to our minds their position, or the cool way in which it was met, than the above fact; and to realise it, Captain M'Clure need hardly add, in his Journal, that he despairs of being able to convey to us even a remote idea of the harassing anxiety he underwent whilst his vessel was settling herself in her icy cradle. "The crashing, creaking, and straining is beyond description," he adds; "and the officer of the watch, when speaking to me, is obliged to put his mouth close to my ear, on account of the deafening noise."

From the 10th of October the ice in and about the ship became quiet, although the pack was still in some places detached from the shore, and moved slightly north and south with the tide. The work of housing over being completed, parties of men and officers began to stroll out for the purpose of acquiring some information of the neighbourhood, and going through the form of taking possession of their new discovery; a ceremony which, though of no great importance when the acquisition was so entirely valueless, served at least to break the dreary monotony of such an existence as theirs now was.

The incidents which arose upon such rambles afforded something to talk about, too; and on some occasions unforeseen dangers added to the excitement of the journeys. One instance will serve to show how unpleasantly these parties of pleasure sometimes ended.

On a calm fine morning, with the temperature just forty degrees below freezing point, Captain M'Clure, Lieut. Cresswell, Dr. Armstrong, and Mr. Mierching, with some seamen, started to visit the eastern side of the strait, and take possession of the land. The road at first lay over the broken and rugged pack; but they afterwards reached a belt of

smooth ice of the present season's formation, and it carried them to a piled-up barrier of broken floe, formed where the new impinged against the heavy old ice which lined the coast.

The tide happened at the moment to have brought the two edges together with much violence; and the *lighter ice* (some feet in thickness, however) was turning up and rolling over, layer upon layer. Follow my leader was the idea of all the party; and away they rushed over the pile formed by the battling floes, cheering as they reached the land, and regardless of the fact that at turn of tide those very floes might part and cut off their retreat.

Every one put his best leg foremost to reach some highland seen in the interior, and from the summit of which, as they anticipated, there would be a possibility of seeing into Barrow's Strait, and thus connecting their work with that of Sir Edward Parry in 1819; there was but little time, therefore, to think of how they were to return. The seamen were left on the first high ridge of land, to construct a cairn upon a spot duly christened after the illustrious consort of Her Most Gracious Majesty; and the officers, after another two hour's hard struggle through deep snow and over a difficult country, reached what was long afterwards remembered as Mount Adventure.

Although some 1400 feet above the level of the sea, the trending away of the coast they were upon prevented their toilsome journey being rewarded by a view of the termination of Prince of Wales Strait upon the eastern side; but on the west there rose in the distance a headland which appeared like the termination of Banks or Baring Land, leaving a blank space between it and the east side of the strait, which confirmed Captain M'Clure in his belief of a channel through, and made his companions exclaim that they saw into Barrow's Strait. This point, however, the captain wisely decided upon placing shortly beyond all doubt or cavil, by travelling to it with a sledge party. Although traces were seen on the snow of bears, deer, foxes, and lemmings, they did not fall in with a single living creature; and the view they obtained of Albert Land was not such as to afford much promise of game, for vegetation, the great test of the presence of animal life in the far north, was exceedingly scanty, and little gladdened the eyes of our travellers beyond small patches of dwarf willow and moss.

"We had returned to the shore," says Captain M'Clure, "and were following our track back to the ship, anticipating the pleasure of a good dinner after a twenty miles' walk, when, upon coming to

where the junction of the land (or fixed ice) and sea floes took place, we beheld a separation of fifty yards of clear black water! Our feelings are easier to be imagined than described!—nearly five miles from the vessel, a polar night closing in; and the only provision amongst the whole party was a solitary tin of preserved meat which had been issued to the men for their dinner, but had now become so solidly frozen as to defy both their knives and teeth."

Just before dark a point a few miles to the southward was observed, which gave some promise of being connected with the sea floe by a block or barrier of ice. Towards it the fatigued party struggled, over very rugged and slippery ice. Every now and then one of their party would experience a severe fall into some deep cleft, or over some huge hummock; and then, thoroughly jaded, they would sit down and feel inclined to drop off into a sleep from which they would never have awakened in this world. Captain M'Clure, however, was aware of this danger; and his voice aroused them to exertion. After firing muskets for some time to attract attention, they were rejoiced to see rockets and guns discharged from the ship. It told them that those on board were taking measures for their

rescue; and meantime they continued to indicate their relative position to the ship by firing at intervals so long as the ammunition lasted, after which they could only hope for the best. About half-past eight a light was seen evidently approaching upon the sea ice. A shout of delight, responded to as heartily, rang through the black stillness of a polar night. Then came the anxious hope that the people from the ship had brought a boat with them; for without it aid was out of the question.

Even in such a moment the sailors' light-heartedness did not desert them; for when one of the party exclaimed that "the ship had fired another rocket!" "Ah!" another observed, "I wish they would fire a Halkett's boat* at us!" a wish in which assuredly all cordially joined.

The relieving party at length approached within hail, upon the opposite side of the lane of water; and, worn-out as Capt. M'Clure's party was, all listened with indescribable anxiety for the answer when, to the momentous question put by the leader,

* Halkett's boats are the ingenious invention of Lieut. Peter Halkett, of the Royal Navy. They are made of Indian-rubber, and, being inflated with air, are very portable and highly useful upon arctic service.

"Have you a boat with you?" there was a pause in which the writer has been assured one could have heard a pulse beat, and then came across the darkness — "No! we did not know you wanted one." Capt. M'Clure sent them back immediately to the ship for the Halkett's boat, and meantime, aided by his officers, he exerted himself to keep the men from falling asleep. Happily the party, on its way to the "Investigator," was met by another conveying boats, and the two returned with all speed to the water, which had now become covered with bay-ice nearly an inch thick.

Mr. Court, however, the master of the "Investigator," was just the man to meet such difficulties as now lay in the way of relieving his shipmates; and in spite of bay ice, and current, and moving ice, by midnight all the party were safely ferried across, and on their way to their ship. "I cannot," says Captain M'Clure in his Journal, "speak too highly of these excellent little boats, or of the ingenuity of the inventor, as without them my large party would have had to endure the rigours of an arctic night, without clothing, tents, or provisions, and the consequences of this might have been very serious."

By four in the morning the travellers had par-

taken of a substantial meal, and retired to their beds heartily tired after eighteen hours' exertion, and grateful for so fortunate a termination to their adventure.

From the 10th to the 21st of October, preparations were made to despatch a sledge-party to the northward to reach Barrow's Strait, and assure themselves of the fact of their having discovered a North-west Passage. Even had they been ready to start at once, it would have been necessary to give time for the ice to form sufficiently to insure the ship from being blown away with the drifting pack whilst the party was absent,—an accident which, experience has shown to arctic navigators, might occur up to a late date in October. A remarkable rise of temperature to 21° *plus* of Fahrenheit, from 2° *minus*, with the wind blowing fresh from *north-east*, would seem to indicate that the winter, of the region in which the "Investigator" was frozen in, is modified by the warm air from the open water of Barrow's Strait, as well as that of southerly winds from the American continent; but this sudden change was far from pleasant to the crew, for they had all put on their winter clothing, and had begun to close up the ship, ready to resist the rigour of the cold, so that

a momentary rise of this nature only created discomfort, and was of too transitory a nature to be beneficial. Indeed the men voted warm weather in the middle of October a nuisance; and the old hands, with a knowing shake of the head and copious expectorations of "'baccy juice," warned the novices against "being fools enough to pull their clothes off on account of such a bit of sunshine, for perhaps in an hour's time Zero would be about again." *Zero*, it must be observed, was invariably referred to as a veritable foe having an actual existence, and was to be combated as they would do the Arch-Enemy. About this time a landing was made on the islands named after Her Royal Highness the Princess Royal; but they offered nothing remarkable beyond the remains of some ancient Esquimaux graves and fox-traps. Traces of animals were, as usual, numerous, and excited as much interest in the minds of the navigators as human footsteps did in that of Robinson Crusoe in his lonely island; for already, with those who could appreciate the possible contingencies of arctic exploration, it became an important desideratum that game of some sort should be found, to eke out the resources of the ship, and keep the crew free from the ravages of scurvy. The pre-



E. G. Creswell del.

Hullmandel & Walton, Lith.

DISCOVERY OF PRINCESS ROYAL ISLAND.

served meats furnished to the ship by Messrs. Gamble were constantly found decayed to an alarming extent; and between the 12th and 18th of October no less than *four hundred and twenty-four pounds* of it were thrown overboard as unfit for food,—much to the regret of Captain M'Clure, who thus early began to see how carefully he should be obliged to husband his resources, in order to carry his crew through their enterprise successfully and in good health.

As yet, however, no reduction in the allowance took place; for the leader of that gallant ship's company knew that, when the time came to render a straitened allowance *actually necessary*, his officers and men would cheerfully and manfully submit to the privation.

October the 21st, 1850, came in with a temperature ranging a little below zero, light winds, and an overcast sky. The ice of the strait appeared to have remained stationary during the last spring-tides, and the usual polar accompaniment of strong gales; Captain M'Clure therefore determined to start for Barrow's Strait with a sledge manned with six men, and commanded by Mr. Court, his active and indefatigable master, and to leave the ship to the charge of Lieut. Haswell,

a fatigue party of men, under Mr. Wynniatt (mate) and Dr. Armstrong, assisting the sledge for a time. Nothing can be more delightful than the terms of warm praise in which Captain M'Clure speaks of all the officers, when upon the eve of parting from them for a service not unattended with some peril. Hearty were the cheers, and Well fare ye!'s on either side, as the little sledge-party bade good-bye to ship and companions, and plodded on in their lonely way, to bring back one day to their shipmates the most interesting intelligence ever told to the hundreds who have devoted health, strength, and energy to the problem of a North-west Passage.

The headlong zeal of the excited crew upon the sledge soon received a lesson in patience from the rugged and broken pack, by the repeated capsizing of the sledge, and its eventual fracture beyond all temporary repair. There was nothing then for it, but to send back Mr. Court to the ship for another sledge, whilst the rest pitched the tent, and slept their first night under canvas upon the frozen ocean.

The "Investigator" had left England but little prepared for extensive sledge-work, and with few if any improvements upon the system of sledge-travelling originally laid down by Sir James C. Ross. The consequence was, that in all her sledge-parties

there was, if possible, a greater amount of hardship and privation than in those of the expeditions under Captains Austin, Kellett, or Belcher, who each improved upon their predecessors' experience. A less amount of work was done by those who had less comfort. We find that, at the close of the first day's journey, the truly frugal meal of Captain M'Clure and his men was a pint of tepid water apiece, into which a little oatmeal was thrown; after which they retired to their sleeping-bags, to rest as best they might with a temperature of 6° *minus*. On October 22nd, the new sledge having joined them and been loaded, the party proceeded to the northward, working over alternate patches of rough and smooth ice until the night came on, and it became too dark to see their way. The tent was then pitched, and supper prepared; but such a supper! one pint of melted snow and a piece of frozen pemmican! Hunger, however, sweetened even this meal; and, tired and cold, they got into their frozen blankets and fell asleep, as if safe on board their snug and comfortable ship, whilst an October snow rolled over their frail canvass tenement. Next morning before daybreak, the cook of the day was roused, and his culinary powers were called into play under the trying cir-

cumstances of a temperature of 32° below freezing point. Some water was warmed sufficiently for a preparation of chocolate to be dissolved in it; and a pint of this tepid beverage being given to each man, together with a biscuit and a half apiece, the party again manned the drag-ropes of the sledge and proceeded to the northward.

After some difficulty in crossing ridges of broken ice—the *hedge-rows* of an arctic landscape,—they reached vast fields of smooth ice of the present season's formation; and here an obstacle of a fresh nature awaited them. The autumnal snow had accumulated heavily upon the surface of these young ice-fields, and, weighing them down, caused the sea-water to flow through sufficiently to render the under part of the snow almost as tenacious as clay. The fatigue of hauling two hundred pounds apiece through such a route was excessive; but the gallant crew strained every nerve, and the distended veins and large drops of perspiration (freezing on the faces of the men) told how well they were working. Unfortunately no water could be had to appease their thirst—they might as well have been labouring on the great Sahara; for every handful of snow which they thrust into their parched mouths augmented rather than

assuaged their sufferings, as it contained more or less of the salts of the sea-water which, as I have before said, rendered the surface of the floe wet and tenacious. About noon, one of the best men of the party became perfectly exhausted, and two others were frostbitten. Captain M'Clure then stopped to give them the noonday meal of cold water and frozen pemmican; but the latter they did not taste of, for thirst had quite overcome hunger, and when they had drunk all that the allowance of fuel for the day would thaw, they again trudged on until dark, when, as on the previous evening, the tent was pitched, and their rough meal and rougher bed prepared. That done, pipes were lit, and whilst some of the men repaired their torn moçassins and seal-skin boots by candle-light, the Captain read them a tale out of "Chambers's Miscellany," until at last his tired companions fell off one by one into the land of dreams. "October 24th," says Captain M'Clure, "was not so cutting a day, the thermometer having risen to 5°+ Fahr.; I walked ahead whilst the sledge was packing, ascended a point of land a hundred feet above the level of the sea, and observed distinctly that the eastern shore of Prince of Wales Strait trended now far away to the east-

ward, whilst that of the western coast (which we were upon) preserved its northerly direction. The point whereon I stood appeared to be the most contiguous to the opposite shore, and the breadth across about fifteen miles; beyond me, the shores of the strait evidently began to separate. This encouraged me in the hope that we were on the point of reaching Barrow's Strait; and seeing a hill at what appeared a distance of 12 miles due north of my position, I returned to the sledge, and pointed it out to the crew as a cape from whence we should see that long-wished-for sea."

Every man now dragged with a will, in the hope of reaching that night the end of his journey; but after seven hours' toilsome labour, the tantalising cape still retained its original position, and they seemed not a mile nearer to it. Captain M'Clure then saw that he had been much deceived in its apparent distance, owing to the clearness of the atmosphere, and that thirty miles was a nearer estimate than twelve, of the probable length of their march. After a night's rest and another hard day's work, they were still two miles off the cape, when night closed in and obliged them to halt and encamp. Though disappointed in not sighting Barrow's Strait on the 25th, they were

all much cheered by the multiplying proofs around them of its close proximity. Away to the north-east they already saw that wonderful oceanic ice which Sir Edward Parry so well described in his memorable voyage to Melville Island, in 1819,—ice which they had left behind them directly they entered Prince of Wales Strait, and which they now again found at its northern extremity. Great hills and dales of blue crystalline sea-ice rolled on before them in the direction of Melville Island; and it required more than ordinary sanguineness of disposition to suppose they ever should navigate the "old Investigator" through such a sea; yet, to have heard the party talk, the feat would have appeared certain of accomplishment,—all things seemed possible to men who had already mastered so much. By an observed meridian altitude of the star Capella, the latitude was now ascertained to be 73° 25′ N., this being the first and only observation they had been able to obtain since quitting their ship.

The morning of the 26th of October, 1850, was fine and cloudless; it was with no ordinary feelings of joy and gratitude that Captain M'Clure and his party started before sunrise to obtain from the adjacent hill a view of that sea which connected

their discoveries with those of Sir Edward Parry. Ascending a hill 600 feet above the sea-level, they patiently awaited the increase of light to reveal the long-sought-for North-west Passage from the Atlantic to the Pacific oceans.

As the sun rose, the panorama slowly unveiled itself. First the land called after H. R. H. Prince Albert showed out on an easterly bearing; and from a point since named after the late Sir Robert Peel, it evidently turned away to the east, and formed the northern entrance of the channel upon that side.

The coast of Banks Land terminated about twelve miles farther on than where the party stood; and thence it turned away to the north-west, forming the northern coast of that land, the loom of which had been so correctly reported and so well placed by Sir Edward Parry's expedition thirty-odd years before. Away to the north, and across the entrance of Prince of Wales Strait, lay the frozen waters of Barrow's or, as it is now called, Melville Strait; and, raised as they were at an altitude of 600 feet above its level, the eye-sight embraced a distance which precluded the possibility of any land lying in that direction between them and Melville Island.

The North-west Passage was discovered! All doubt as to the water-communication between the two great oceans was removed; and it now alone remained for Captain M'Clure, his officers and men, to perfect the work by traversing the few thousand miles of known ground between them and their homes.

The feelings of Captain M'Clure and his companions may be easily understood when we remember what they had gone through to earn this success, and how the hand of the All-powerful had borne them through no ordinary dangers in their gallant efforts; but no arrogant self-estimation formed part of the crowd of tumultuous feelings which made their hearts beat so high, and never from the lips of man burst a more fervent *Thank God!* than now from those of that little company.

And we feel that they had reason to be proud as well as grateful, when we call to mind the time, the money, the men which England had previously lavished, without success, on the discovery of this great geographical problem.

Franklin and his heroic followers had, indeed, not been found; but, in seeking them, the great secret they had sought to solve had been unravelled,

and Captain M'Clure felt that, even should he be so unfortunate as never to discover the missing expedition, he nevertheless should not return to his country with empty hands.

The position of Mount Observation, from which the important discovery had been made, was ascertained to be in latitude (observed) 73° 30′ 39″ N., longitude 114° 39′ W., and by lunar 114° 14′ W. The travellers encamped that night on Cape Lord John Russell, and cheered lustily as they reached the shores of Barrow's Strait. A mimic bonfire, of a broken sledge and dwarf willow, was lighted by the seamen in celebration of the event; and an extra glass of grog, given them by their leader, added to their happiness.

The question of a North-west Passage being now placed beyond all doubt, the rapid fall of temperature warned Captain M'Clure that he should return to his ship without delay, and terminate the trials the whole party were exposed to every night. Their fur robes were frozen into a solid mass, which could only be thawed by the men lying upon them for some hours; the blanket-bags were so stiff from the same cause as to stand erect; and their clothes, caps, whiskers, and beards were frozen together, and required to be thawed

inside the tent after they had retired to rest; and when the clothes were taken off, they had to be placed under the body that they might not freeze again: and the hardships and discomforts to be endured in consequence of the lateness of the season, although no novelty to the arctic traveller, would appear almost fabulous to others, if minutely described. From Point Lord John Russell, the coast of Banks Land was seen to trend away to the westward, and increase in boldness of outline and altitude. Much vegetation, for this latitude, was observed, and numerous traces of animals, such as the deer, hare, and ptarmigan, as well as of their destroyers the fox and the wolf; but not one of the animals themselves was seen. A large cairn was constructed, a duo. record of the visit of the party placed therein, and then, in the teeth of a S.E. gale, they commenced their return to the "Investigator."

The return journey might have ended seriously for the leader of the party. On the 30th October, at 2 P.M., having seen the Princess Royal Isles, and knowing the position of the "Investigator" from them, Captain M'Clure left his sledge, with the intention of pushing for the ship, and having a warm meal ready for his men on their arrival.

When still six miles from the ship the night overtook him; and with it came a dense mist accompanied with snow-drift, which rolled down the strait, and obscured every object. Unable to see his road, but endeavouring to preserve a course by the wind, M'Clure continued to hasten on, until repeated and heavy falls amongst the broken ice warned him to desist or incur the additional peril of broken limbs. "I now," he says, "climbed on a mass of squeezed-up ice, in the hope of seeing my party, should they pass near, or of attracting the attention of some one on board the vessel by firing my fowling-piece. Unfortunately, I had no other ammunition than what it was loaded with; for I had fancied, when I left the sledge, that the two charges in the gun would be all I should be likely to require. After waiting for an hour patiently, I was rejoiced to see through the mist the glare of a blue light, evidently burnt in the direction in which I had left the sledge. I immediately fired to denote my position; but my fire was evidently unobserved, and, both barrels being discharged, I was unable to repeat the signal. My only hope now rested upon the ship answering; but nothing was to be seen, and although I once more saw, at a greater distance, the glare of another blue light

from the sledge, there seemed no probability of my having any other shelter for the night than that the floe afforded. Two hours elapsed: I endeavoured to see the face of my pocket-compass by the light of a solitary lucifer match, which happened to be in my pocket; but in this hope I was cruelly disappointed, for it fizzed and went out, leaving me in total darkness. It was now half-past-eight; there were eleven hours of night before me, a temperature 15° below zero, bears prowling about, and I with an unloaded gun in my hands. The sledge-party might, however, reach the ship, and finding I had not arrived, search would be made and help be sent; so I walked to and fro upon my hummock until I suppose it must have been eleven o'clock, when that hope fled likewise. Descending from the top of the slab of ice upon which I had clambered, I found under its lee a famous bed of soft dry snow, and, thoroughly tired out, I threw myself upon it and slept for perhaps three hours, when upon opening my eyes I fancied I saw the flash of a rocket. Jumping upon my feet, I found that the mist had cleared off, and that the stars and aurora-borealis were shining in all the splendour of an arctic night. Although unable to see the islands or the ship, I wandered about the

ice in different directions until daylight, when, to my great mortification, I found I had passed the ship fully the distance of four miles." Retracing his steps, Captain M'Clure reached the "Investigator" on the 31st October very tired, but otherwise none the worse for his rough and dangerous exposure to a winter's night in 73° north latitude. A few hours afterwards the sledge arrived under Mr. Court; and great was the joy on board, and hearty the congratulations at their safe return, and the glorious news they brought.

Nothing, I fancy, can better bring home to the comprehension of the uninitiated in arctic sledge-travelling, the severity of the labour undergone by officers and men employed upon duty of that nature, than the following extract from Captain M'Clure's private journal—and similar ones might be found in those of many other officers:—"The weight brought back to the ship upon the sledge (after an absence of nine days) was 793 pounds, being an *increase*, upon what we started with, of upwards of 100 pounds. This was occasioned by the accumulation of ice upon the furs, tent, blankets, and sledge, in consequence of the vapour thrown off by our bodies and cooking-apparatus condensing and freezing upon every article

which it came in contact with; and, strange as it may seem, the whole consumption of food during nine days amongst eight men, independently of chocolate and spirits, amounted but to eighteen pounds of pemmican, thirty-one pounds of biscuit, and two pounds of oatmeal, — a trifling consumption almost incredible, and only to be accounted for by the crew being every night too exhausted, after their day's exertion, to care for anything else but water: but this article was not to be obtained without thawing it, and the allowance of fuel would only admit of each man receiving daily five gills to drink, namely, half a pint at breakfast, a gill at dinner, and half a pint in the evening."

On this, however, they had worked cheerfully, and accomplished an average of twenty miles per diem, — a feat which it is but right to say only the discovery of a North-west Passage could have carried the men through; for although Lieut. (now Commander) Mecham has in later years far excelled Captain M'Clure's journey with respect to distance accomplished, it was only by carefully feeding up and nursing the strength of his men, that he at this moment enjoys the honour of having won the palm of distance from such men as Captains Richards and M'Clintock. During the

absence of their captain, the officers of the "Investigator" had been far from idle. Upon the adjacent shores of Prince of Wales Strait they succeeded in killing a fine herd of musk-oxen, consisting of three bulls, a cow, and a calf, and yielding a supply of 1296 pounds of solid meat. The moral effect of the fact that such a quantity of fresh food could be found near a place where they were frozen up until it pleased Providence to release them, was very beneficial upon the minds of all, and added materially to the feeling of general confidence with which they prepared to meet the coming winter.

The ventilating-tubes to the lower deck were now fitted, to force out by a current of pure but cold air the heated and deleterious vapours generated between-decks by a number of men living in so confined a space. The last winter housings were spread, and a winter school-room established, to which thirty pupils immediately repaired to learn to read and write; and by the 11th November the "Investigator" wvs ready to bid the bright sun good bye.

The day was cloudless, the temperature down to 26° *minus*, and one uniform sheet of snow and ice spread on every side, over land and sea. Winter had set her seal upon that silent strait; and but for the

rocky buttresses of Princess Royal Island frowning over the floe, or the dark cleft of a ravine upon Banks Land, it would not have been easy to detect the line of demarcation between earth and water. Towards noon, the bright edge of the upper limb of the sun rolled slowly along the southern horizon, and bade them adieu for eleven long weeks; the long night of a polar winter had commenced. Between the 2nd of November and the 2nd of December, the new floes were found to have increased in thickness ten inches and a half, the last measurement making them 2 ft. 6½ in. Little if any snow could be found on them, for a reason before mentioned, namely, that directly any weight of snow collected upon the weak ice it would cause the sea-water to flow through, and in so low a temperature the sludge so formed would rapidly become a part of the solid floe. In this manner the ice that covers that arctic sea accumulates perhaps more rapidly by the action upon its surface than that of the congelation of the water beneath.

During the first fortnight in December the temperature of the external air ranged from 23° — to 37° — Fahr., whilst between-decks from 40° + to 50° + was about the average.

It had been Captain M'Clure's great anxiety to

insure warmth on the lower deck, without the accumulation of wet arising from the natural condensation of the heated internal atmosphere against the cold surface of the sides and deck; and he fully succeeded (as had been done in Captain Austin's expedition) in securing this desirable end, by fitting ventilators and clearing the deck of men for the major part of the day, so that a free current of air circulated throughout the vessel. By these means he secured the health of his men to a degree previously unprecedented upon arctic service; and they duly appreciated the forethought and care thus bestowed upon them. In the following season they resumed their duties as if still fresh from England, and thus enabled Captain M'Clure to achieve a more perilous voyage than that already accomplished.

The minute details of the daily events of an arctic winter have been so often described that it is unnecessary to recount them. In this instance they consist only of an endless repetition of decreasing warmth and daylight, broken sometimes by the more than usual brilliancy of an aurora borealis, or a great frequency of shooting stars. The arctic fox, as usual, came to visit the new intruders upon his domains, but only to be trapped and have his snow-

white fur packed up to ornament the neck of some fair lady at home. The arctic raven, the hardiest of the feathered tribes, and the only one that appears willingly to brave a polar winter, was seen in the depth of the season to flit through the cold and sunless atmosphere like an evil spirit, his sullen croak alone breaking the silence of that death-like scene. No one shot any of these ravens; and they seemed to know they were secure.

Christmas came at length, with all its hallowed recollections; and it was kept on board the "Investigator," as it ever is in every part of the Christian world, in cheerfulness and in good fellowship. The captain's table groaned under good cheer. There was beef from the Sandwich Islands, which had been kept in a frozen state for six months; there was veal (of musk ox) from the shores of Prince of Wales Strait; there was mince-meat from Old England, splendid preserves from the Green Isle, and many a dainty dish from Scotland. Each one talked of home; the hours were calculated when, allowing for the difference of time, those most dear to the talkers would be going to church, to dinner, to ball, or to bed, and an honest manly hope was expressed that, one of those days, they might yet be there to see and share in happiness, in their

estimate of which distance, of course, "lent enchantment to the view." Thus closed the year 1850: the "Investigator" that day had only one man ill; and he was one who had concealed the fact of his being in delicate health when joining the ship at Woolwich. "Every credit," says Captain M'Clure, "is due to the medical officers, Drs. Armstrong and Henry Piers," for their unremitting attention to the health of the men; "and nothing could be more satisfactory than the state of the vessel, her crew, and her resources on that day,"—the last of the year 1850.

CHAP. XII.

New Year's Day 1851.—Relative Positions of the different Expeditions.—The increasing Cold relieved by the daily Augmentation of Solar Light.—Deer and Ptarmigan seen in the Depth of Winter.—The Theory of Animal Migration in Arctic Regions subverted.—The Raven leaves the Ship.—Return of the Sun.—Rambles on the Ice.—Revival of Health and Spirits.—Winter Sporting.—Preparations for Sledge-Parties in Search of Franklin's Expedition.—Depôts established to secure the Safety of the Travellers.—Departure of the various Parties.—Hardships endured by Sledge-Crews in High Latitudes in Spring Journeys.—The Zeal and Courage of the Seamen.—Their Labours compared with those of the American Voyageurs.—The Position of the "Investigator" in 1850.—Murder of Lieut. Barnard by North-west Indians.

NEW Year's day, in the year of grace 1851, was a remarkable day in the arctic regions. On the side of Baffin's Bay, the naval expedition consisting of Her Majesty's ships "Resolute," "Assistance," "Pioneer," and "Intrepid," manned by 180 officers and men, had pushed into the ice until caught by the winter under Griffith's Island. Not many miles from them, in a small bay in North Devon, two

handy little brigs under Captain W. Penny, a noble specimen of the merchant sailor, lay securely housed in, manned by fifty sailors chosen from the hardy whaling-crews of Aberdeen and Peterhead. Close to these last vessels another English craft was wintering, under the command of the veteran Admiral Sir John Ross. Three score and ten years had not quenched in him that strange love for hardship and adventure which seems the only assignable motive that can induce men to continue to follow the hazardous career of an arctic navigator. But on the occasion of which I am writing, a nobler and higher purpose, it is to be hoped, than the mere love of adventure, carried that aged officer as well as others to the frozen regions. Whilst, on the *eastern* side of the unknown waste which lay between Banks Land and Griffith's Island, we have these seven vessels securely wintering, and preparing, with no small zeal, to push out their sledges directly the daylight and temperature would admit of it, on the *western* side the "Investigator" alone, far from all communication with either savage or civilised man, was flying her pendant with as much pride and confidence as if the solitude into which she had boldly pushed was the spot, of all others, her

gallant crew would wish to pass their New Year's day in.

And they had cause, too, for contentment, and reason to be grateful to God; for their ship was secure, the ice was stationary, and though all was dark, and cold, and cheerless without board, within there was warmth, food, good fellowship, and perfect health. Far different was the fate of another expedition, which had left home on the same mission.

An American party under Lieut. Commander De Haven had, with two schooners, pushed up to Griffith's Island at the same time that the English ships did so, in 1850; but, being unprepared for wintering, the American vessels tried to escape the frozen grip of an arctic winter. Under sail, they bore up for Baffin's bay; but the rapidly-forming ice seized upon their ships, and, cradled in it, the "Reserve" and "Advance" drifted whither it listed. Death threatening them in every shape, their vessels groaning under pressure at one time, and then tossed up by broken ice in the fury of a midwinter gale, strange indeed would it have been if scurvy had not made its appearance amongst them, and well might the English seamen congratulate themselves on the immunity they en-

joyed from the horrible winter sufferings of their American coadjutors, and the still more hapless position of the crews of the "Erebus" and "Terror"; for they (poor fellows!) were, as we believe, still alive on that New Year's day. Alas! who shall tell how that sad advent of their last new year was past by those gallant men!

It is necessary to the clear comprehension of the voyage of the "Investigator," that the reader should bear in mind the relative positions of other ships in the various stages of her long voyage, and also that Dr. Rae was wintering on the shores of the Great Bear Lake in North America, ready to start, with boat and sledge, northward immediately that the weather should allow him. The "Investigator's" New Year's day was a happy one; many a delicacy long and carefully hoarded was produced at the table, at which all the officers and their captain met; and not the least remarkable of these dainties was a quarter of mutton which had been procured at the Sandwich Islands in the previous July, a pretty good proof of the preservative qualities of frost. On this day there was but one man on the sick list, and all now felt that the most trying portion of the winter would soon be past; for with every returning day the sun was again up-

proaching their horizon, and, slowly though it was, still the light *was* augmenting daily. Light was what they, as well as all others who have wintered in the North, most sighed for. The cold, however intense, is robbed of half its terrors, if there is light to enable the arctic navigator to see around him, so that he may take his walk or, gun in hand, seek for game.

The darkest period of an arctic winter is from about the 10th of December to about the 6th of January, whereas the lowest temperatures usually occur in February, when there is considerable twilight, and, in those latitudes of which we are writing, some hours of sunlight. This merciful dispensation of Providence is one amongst the many which will strike the least-observant visitor to those regions.

From the 9th January, 1851, to the 16th, was the coldest period registered on board the "Investigator;" but there was tolerable light then from 9·30 A.M. to 2·30 P.M., so much, indeed, that at noon on the 16th the only star whose light was not quenched by the twilight was the bright star Arcturus. The spirits of the men rose, in spite of the thermometer showing 40° to 50° below zero of Fahrenheit! What cared they for quicksilver

being solid, any more than for the solidity of the surface of the sea over which they strode? No, their health and spirits were good, they could see that the sun was coming back; and did it not promise them all they wanted? — summer thaws, open water, fresh adventures, the discovery of the "Erebus" and "Terror"; and then huzza for England!

Early one dark and icy morning in January, a man named John Eames was walking out upon the floe, and saw pass close to him a small herd of rein-deer trotting quietly towards Princess Royal Islands. Had the ghost of his grandfather suddenly appeared to him upon the floe, John Eames could not have been more astonished; for he, like everyone else, confidently believed in every living creature having gone to more favoured climes to the southward, until the summer should return. The news quickly spread; appetites sharpened; and sportsmen issued forth to slay venison. But there was no venison to be slain; the deer were nowhere to be found, although the discovery of a ptarmigan gave rise to much astonishment as to how birds could exist in such a temperature, with the land covered deeply in snow, and, where it happened to be exposed, the soil

so hard as to destroy iron tools in attempting to loosen it.

These discoveries, however, raised a doubt of the correctness of the theory of animal-emigration in the arctic regions, as laid down by that eminent naturalist and traveller Sir John Richardson, as well as of the opinion in its favour expressed by the late Admiral Sir Edward Parry; and Captain M'Clure in his Journal says, "it is pretty evident that during the whole winter animals may be found in these straits, and that the want of sufficient light alone prevents our larder being stored with fresh food." "Subsequent observation has completely overthrown the idea that the reindeer, musk-ox, or other animals inhabiting the archipelago of islands north of America, migrate southward to avoid an arctic winter. Throughout Banks Land, Melville Island, Bathurst and Cornwallis Land—in short, wherever British seamen have wintered of late years—there have been found indubitable proofs of the reindeer, bear, musk-ox, marmot, wolf, hare, and ptarmigan—in short, all the Fauna of those climes—wintering in the latitudes in which they are found during the summer.

January closed in with strong gales of wind

from the westward; and on one occasion, the wind veering to S.W. and blowing very hard, the hot air forced up from more genial regions raised the temperature from 35°— to 15°— of Fahr., — a change which, however pleasing, could not be enjoyed, as the snow-drift was too heavy for a soul to venture outside the friendly shelter of the woollen housings. An incident characteristic of life in the far north happened at this time. A raven, which had haunted the ship during the past period of cold and darkness, left it — and his departure was quite an event, something for the men to remark and talk upon; — and his society was more missed than the loss of a more pleasing pet would have been elsewhere.

"The absent bird was a loss," says the gallant Captain of the "Investigator," "which we all felt; it had been the only creature that appeared as isolated as ourselves, and a mutual confidence had been established between us. The raven used to visit the ship unmolested except by the dog, — who appeared to know the bird as well as we did, was always on the look-out for its visit, and went out to meet it occasionally. The dog would run at Ralpho; but he would hop over his head, and resume his occupation at the dirt-heap,

keeping an eye, however, all the while upon the dog, and uttering a harsh croak occasionally, as if enjoying the fun of tantalising him."

On February the 3rd the glorious sun rose again, after having been absent since the 11th November. Eighty-four days of twilight and darkness! Few but the dweller in those high latitudes can understand the joy with which the return of that bright luminary was hailed; and the congratulations exchanged, at having been spared to rejoice again in the blessed sunlight, were mingled with heartfelt aspirations for the future.

Officers and men were every day extending their walks. Many a party was made up to Princess Royal Island, each being sanguine on starting of bringing back a well-filled game-bag; but generally the evening saw the sportsmen return unsuccessful and tired, with no other consolation than that of having seen at a distance some solitary wolf, which—upon the principle of "where there are bees there must be honey"—they strongly maintained proved venison to be in the neighbourhood, and this venison might be theirs. Winter sporting in a temperature of 60° below freezing point, when all the country is buried in snow and the sportsman stands out in strong relief

upon the snowy landscape, is seldom remunerative to the larder; but it has the merit of giving occupation to minds pressed down by the canker of monotony; and one could smile and enjoy the marvellous tales, brought back by the men, of the number of miles they had walked, the quantity of game seen, or the size of reindeer footprints upon the snow, as well as the excellent reasons given why neither flesh nor fowl filled their game-bags.

That it should not become warm directly the sun rose, was vexatious to those not gifted with patience; and many a one sighed at seeing the thermometer on February 21st registering 44° — in the shade, whilst in the sun the rays playing upon the bulb of the instrument only raised it to 28° —, or 60 degrees below freezing point! Outdoor sports now commenced; and to see the heavy falls the men experienced in their thick winter clothing and cloth snow-boots, whilst playing rounders upon the ice, an observer might have wondered how they escaped fractured bones and broken heads. Appetites that had failed now began to return, pale and yellow faces again to recover their ruddy and sunburnt colours; and long discussions already arose as to how Jack would spend his money

when he arrived in England; an anxiety which often in every clime weighs upon his mind when nothing else will.

Arrangements connected with the travelling operations of the coming spring were now entered upon; and although the present thickness of the ice in Prince of Wales Strait gave no promise of an early disruption, still Captain M'Clure determined, before the sledges left the ship, to establish such a depôt, and place such means on the islands, as should render the sledge-parties independent of the ship, in the event of the ice breaking up and sweeping the "Investigator" north or south before their return. Early in March, therefore, a whale-boat was carried on sledges, with much labour and difficulty, to the Princess Royal Island, and a depôt established of three months' victualling for the entire crew; so that should the ship even be destroyed in the coming summer, a portion if not all of the people might escape to the Mackenzie River or Barrow's Strait, at which latter place some of Captain Austin's expedition would be met with. With this depôt of provisions a record was placed, stating by whom and why it was established, and beseeching any parties from other ships that might visit it, to consider the provisions

as sacred, and only to be touched upon the most urgent necessity.

These precautionary measures taken, the attention of leader, officers, and men was turned to the equipment of the sledges for their journeys over the ice in search of Franklin, as well as to the expediency of communicating the "Investigator's" position to any ships that might be in their neighbourhood.

Early in March the temperature in the sun rose to 10°+, and heavy breezes, with much snow, indicated the breaking up of the winter season; and as the action of the tides had already occasioned numerous cracks in the ice, Captain M'Clure landed another boat upon the eastern shore of the Straits, to secure still further the safety of his travellers.

April brought rapid increase of sun, light, and heat. Embankments of snow were removed, daylight admitted below, and the walks of the officers became more extended. Game was sometimes seen, and ptarmigans occasionally shot; but there was too much work to be done connected with restowing and examining the state of the provisions in the vessel, and equipping the sledge-parties, to allow of any systematic plan of procuring fresh food being pursued.

On the 17th of the month the temperature, which had risen steadily, stood at 38° + in the sun, and the floe around the ship became studded with pools of water, formed rather, however, by the tide forcing itself up the cracks and weak points in the packed ice than by any action of the sun upon its surface. An early summer naturally was anticipated; and profiting by the experience gained at Port Leopold in 1848, Captain M'Clure determined to get his parties away at once, instead of waiting, as Sir James Ross had done, until May 15th. The sledges were therefore laden; and although with provisions for six weeks and their equipments, every sledge weighed eleven hundredweight, and there were only six men to drag each, they moved, on trial, at a rate which gave good promise of successful journeys.

Each of the three sledges was to take a separate course: one, commanded by Lieut. Haswell, was directed to proceed to the S. E., following the coast of Prince Albert's Land, towards the land seen north of Dolphin and Union Strait, and named by its discoverer Wollaston Land; another sledge, under Lieut. S. Gurney Cresswell, was to follow the coast of Baring or Banks Land, to the N. W.; whilst the remaining party with Mr. Wynniatt

(mate) was charged with the duty of examining the coast of Albert Land to the N. E. towards Cape Walker.

On April 18th, 1851, the sledges of the "Investigator" left the ship * with the hearty good wishes of all on board; and like their brother seamen of the expedition then wintering under Griffith's Island, they held on their toilsome course in spite of cold, hardship, and every difficulty, cheered by the then still strong hope of finding Franklin's lost expedition. To follow each party in its arduous and monotonous labours, would be but an uninteresting repetition of an oft-told tale; but yet the general reader should be reminded how nobly those gallant seamen toiled who were despatched from the "Investigator," or from other ships, to search on foot for our missing comrades. Sailors by profession, and consequently unaccustomed to long marches or to dragging heavy weights,—the major portion of their lives probably having been spent under a broiling sun on the coast of Africa, or in the East or West Indies,—we yet see these men readily enter the Arctic regions, and push into the sea beyond the

* The sledges of Captain Austin's expedition, then wintering at Griffith's Island, left, it will be remembered, three days earlier, namely, on April 15th, 1851.

boundaries of our knowledge of the earth's geography, and even of the limits of the wanderings of the hardy Esquimaux.

Imprisoned as they had been for a long and dark winter; left to their own resources entirely for health, food, and amusement; rationed upon the coarse and endless repetition of salt beef and salt pork, varied with occasional preserved meat to check the slow but certain march of scurvy, they were now sent to travel upon snow and ice, each with 200 pounds to drag, which could not be left behind, for it comprised food, fuel, raiment, sledge, and tent. If they should feel cold, they must be patient; for until they return to the ship there will be no fire to warm them. Should their parched tongues cleave to their mouths, they must swallow snow to allay their thirst; for water there is none. Should their health fail, pity is all that their comrades can give them; for the sledge must move on its daily march. If hungry, they must console themselves by looking forward to being better fed when the travelling is over; for the rations are necessarily, in sledge journeys, weighed off to an ounce; in short, from the time they leave the ship until their return to it, the service is ever one of

suffering and privation which calls for the utmost endurance and most zealous energy.

Severely did the spring of 1851 see the good qualities of the British seaman tested, not only among the parties from the "Investigator" but also among those of Captain Austin and Captain Penny; and in every case the result was the same. No man flinched from his work; some of the gallant fellows really died at the drag-rope; others by frost-bites became cripples for life; but not a murmur arose in any party: as the weak fell out from the sledge appointed to the longest and most severe journey, there were always more than enough of volunteers to take their places. It has been the fashion of late to decry the labours of these men-of-war's men in the search for Franklin, and to point out how far they fell short, in endurance of fatigue and length of journey, of the deeds of the Hudson Bay voyageurs; but the comparison, if impartially made, would really result in proving Jack by far the better man.

The voyageur is inured to long foot journeys, and to carrying or dragging heavy weights; sailors are not;—yet they had to walk whilst the voyageurs of Richardson, Pullen, or Rae's expeditions were sitting in canoes. If the distances of the respective sledge journeys are compared, the sailor still carries

off the palm. The voyageur, too, has never travelled upon the petty rations of our men; if he has occasionally been starved, he has had a surfeit of game soon afterwards.

There is not a part of North America over which the voyageur has worked, where either drift-wood or game are not found: when his day's toil has been over, the voyageur has found a fire to warm him, fresh food to invigorate him. Not so the sailor, with one or two rare exceptions. When winter comes, the voyageur retires to some snug house near a lake where fish are plentiful, or to a sheltered spot where deer abound; how different the arctic seaman's winter abode! and the voyageur has never seen the sun set except for a day or two at most.

Those who wish to praise the Hudson Bay Company's trappers and travellers, — and none can deny their merits, — should do so without robbing our poor sailors of their humble guerdon. Their reward, poor fellows, has been but small; and living, as they do, by the sweat of their brows, shattered health to them brings starvation. Humble, unpolished, and uneducated they may be; but they have laboured hard, and deserve well of their country and profession. Had all their

leaders been as honest, as single-hearted, as upright in purpose, and as stanch as the common sailor, the wretched tale brought home in 1854 by Dr. Rae would not have had to be told.*

* The Editor does not know of any sledge journey which can more vividly depict the sufferings which some sledge parties of sailors went through, than the one, of which the following is a brief extract, from the daily journal of the officer in command, the present Captain George H. Richards, an officer second to none in the indomitable energy and skill he has displayed in the successful execution of every duty entrusted him in Arctic service.

"On the 22nd Feb. 1854," says Captain Richards, "the temperature having ranged between 35° and 45° *minus* for the last four days, I started with two sledges, by Captain Belcher's orders, for Beechey Island, fifty miles distant. After eight miles dragging, the men were so very tired, cold, and miserable, that they hardly had patience to wait for their frozen meat being thawed; and that eaten, they threw themselves down in their blanket bags, half frozen as they were, to sleep. Next day (the 23rd) the thermometer registered 40° below zero, or 72° below freezing point!" The poor fellows dragged on as well as they could; but the Captain's hands were too cold, and his ideas too much engaged in attending to their safety, to write any journal beyond the hasty but graphic expressions in his note-book,—"It's distressingly cold!" "the pork as brittle as rwin!" "the rum frozen!" So fatigued were many of the men, and so debilitated from constant suffering, that their stomachs rejected what food they attempted to swallow. On the 24th, the temperature had fallen to 74° below freezing point. It seemed as if human endurance could go no further; yet they tugged on, for anything was better than returning to the wretchedness

Whilst the sledge parties of Captain M'Clure's ship as well as those of Captain Austin's and Penny's expeditions (*see* Stray Leaves from an Arctic Journal)

they had left on board their ship. Their noon-day meal, called lunch, could not be partaken of; for the rum and the bacon were solid, and they were too cold to wait whilst either thawed. Passing by where the gallant Frenchman Bellot had fallen a sacrifice in attempting to carry out the *imperative* orders of Sir Edward Belcher (vide Blue Books), the worn-out and exhausted crews encamped at last off Cape Grinnell.

Another night of sleeplessness passed, for the cold was too intense for the most tired to sleep.

On the 25th Feb. the jaded crews made their way across Griffin Bay, the temperature still so low, and their sufferings so intense, that they could neither eat nor sleep,—a glass of grog and a bit of biscuit being all their food. On the next day the temperature was still 73° below freezing point (41° — of Fahr.); exhaustion was apparent with all the party, and Captain Richards had, as he says, "serious misgivings as to whether he should be able to proceed." On making the attempt, frost-bites became frequent and threatening; but a fresh gale from the north fortunately blew their sledges on, and in the evening they camped near Point Innes. On the following day Captain Richards and Mr. Herbert pushed on to the "North Star," at Beechey Island, for aid; and once arrived there, both he and his men fervently thanked their God for his protection through no ordinary suffering. It required a week's rest to restore his men to health and strength; and perhaps the most painful part of this tale of suffering is, that it all arose from an idea upon Captain Belcher's part that he was gifted with prophetic powers as to a high range of temperature after the 22nd February,—a pure hallucination, as the result proved.

are plodding along on their arduous search, I must, to connect the thread of our narrative, remind the reader that we left H.M.S. "Enterprise," Captain Collinson, consort of the "Investigator," in the Pacific Ocean. She reached the latitude of Icy Cape as late as the 22nd of September, 1850, having made a long and circuitous passage from the Sandwich Islands. The pack ice was there met; and with winter evidently closing in, the prospect of rounding Cape Barrow that year was at an end. In obedience, therefore, to the strict injunction contained in his orders not to winter in the pack, Captain Collinson bore up for a warmer climate, so as to have his crew and ship ready to resume their labours in the season of 1851.

All Captain Collinson knew of the position of Captain M'Clure, was the report of the "Plover," Captain Moore, who on August 5th, 1850, had seen the "Investigator," under a press of canvas, steering northward off Wainwright Inlet. Unfortunately one of the many rumours, easily to be traced to the "Investigator's" communication with the natives of the north coast, which reached the "Plover" in her idle winter quarters, induced Captain Collinson to allow an enterprising young officer, Lieut. Barnard, to be landed in the Russian North-west Ameri-

can settlements, in order to inquire into their truth; and in carrying out this service he was brutally murdered by savages in a surprise of one of the Russian posts, called Darabin redoubt, not far from Norton Sound. The circumstances under which it occurred are related in the following letter of his companion, Mr. Adams, assistant surgeon.

"Garishka, Russian Fishing Station, Norton Sound,
N. W. Coast of America, 3rd March, 1851.

"SIR,

"The information I have been able to obtain here, appears to be more probable than that which I gained at Michaelowski. It is to the following effect:—

"Soon after Lieutenant Barnard's arrival at Darabin, a Russian and two natives were sent to the Koukuk river to trade for skins, and they took a letter from Mr. Barnard to be forwarded to the Englishmen on the Ekko. These three men were murdered by the Indians.

"On the morning of the 16th of February the governor of the redoubt (Maxemoff or Darabin), who was sleeping in the same room with Mr. Barnard and Boskey, hearing a noise outside, went to the door; and immediately on opening it he was killed by a spear.

"The Indians then rushed into the room: Mr. Barnard seized his gun, one barrel of which happened to be loaded with a cartridge, and wounded a man in the arm; he then struck with the butt, until the stock broke; he was severely wounded in the abdomen by a spear, but I cannot learn that he received any wounds from arrows.

"Boskey was badly wounded in the abdomen by two arrows, in the hands by a spear being drawn through them in attempting to wrest it from an Indian, and in the arms by a knife. I can learn nothing of the other Indians except that they killed one native.

"The inhabitants of the two villages, Tollúkok and Koltargar, were at Oomalartof at the time of the attack, and all were killed, — men, women, and children, — to the number of about fifty. The six who escaped were sleeping in the bath-house at the redoubt.

"I cannot ascertain the number of the attacking party, only that there were 'plenty' of them. Each man carried a shield of thick wood, which was musket-proof; and after the first attack they appear to have planted them in a line so as to form a wall, from behind which they fired at the surviving inhabitants.

"There appears to have been no motive for the attack, and so unexpected was it that they were sleeping with their doors unfastened.

"I have seen some of the spears here; they are large, and appear to be of European manufacture; they are inlaid with brass and copper.

"I have added to the enclosed tracing all the information I have been able to obtain relative to the situation and names of villages and rivers.

"On the 5th of January last Mr. Barnard sent a native of this village to the 'Plover' with despatches; he has not been heard of since, and the natives are all so much frightened that I cannot get another to go. I therefore leave these papers with the Russian in charge of this station, to be forwarded if possible.

"We leave this to-morrow.

"I have &c.,

"EDWARD ADAMS,

"Assistant Surgeon, R.N.

"Commander T. E. L. Moore,
H. M. S. 'Plover,' Grantley Harbour."

The sad catastrophe is briefly told, in the handwriting of poor Barnard, in the annexed note

to Doctor Adams. It speaks volumes for the nerve of the gallant officer, and is strongly characteristic of the man.

"DEAR ADAMS,

"I am dreadfully wounded in the abdomen; my entrails are hanging out. I do not suppose I shall live long enough to see you. The Cu-ú-chuk Indians made the attack whilst we were in our beds. Boskey is badly wounded, and Darabin dead.

"I think my wound would have been trifling had I had medical advice. I am in great pain; nearly all the natives of the village are murdered. Set out for this with all haste.

"JOHN BARNARD."

The Russian letter on which this was written bore the date of 5th February, Darabin Redoubt; Russian time being twelve days later than ours. The writing betrayed the agony of the gallant writer, and parts were nearly illegible.

CHAP. XIII.

Signs of Summer Increase.—Shooting Parties are sent out.—Narrow Escape of Whitefield.—Lieut. Cresswell returns, having ascertained Banks Land to be an Island.—Curious Appetite of a Bear.—Lieut. Haswell returns, with Intelligence of Esquimaux being at hand.—Visit the Esquimaux.—The Party under Mr. Wynniatt return.—June in Prince of Wales Strait.—A Glance at the other Expeditions wintering in Arctic Seas, under Austin, Penny, Ross, and De Haven.—A Midsummer Scene in Prince of Wales Strait.—The Polar Summer's Night.—The Floe breaks up.—"Investigator" again free.—Compasses refuse to traverse.—The Ship beset, and drifting to the North-east along the Eastern Shore.—Wood-Currents.—Tides.—No Passage found.—Captain M'Clure decides to try another Course, by going round Banks Land.

Between the 22nd of April and 5th of May the signs of approaching summer increased rapidly with those who were left on board the "Investigator." Every indication of thaw, heat, and vitality was keenly watched and minutely noted; indeed these observations, and fluctuating hopes and fears for their brother shipmates absent in the sledge parties, formed the constant round of the existence of those whose good fortune it

was not to share in the labours and occupations of sledge journeys. One day a small lemming was caught, and its fur having changed slightly, from pure white to a faint brown, was a prognostication little likely to disappoint them of the snows being about to melt away from the surface of the smothered land;—it was the olive-leaf in the mouth of the dove. On another occasion, the quarter-master, whilst clearing the ice off the surface of a hole in the floe, which was always kept clear in case of fire occurring, was charmed to see a seal pop his head above water, and stare wonderingly, with his big lustrous eyes, at the blunt Yorkshireman who was intruding upon his dominions.

Some there are who might have spared the poor seal; but the "Man of Hull" hardened his heart, for he thought of the savoury fry it would yield, and straightway poor Poussie* was transfixed with a lance, and his skin, oil, and flesh were soon afterwards contributing their respective quota to the health and comfort of our navigators.

Then came a magnificent polar bear; a real giant, ten feet long, with footprints twelve

* A term borrowed by our whalers from the Greenlanders.

inches in diameter, bore down to survey the "Investigator." She was of course fired at, but fortunately escaped with life and skin. The fox and ptarmigan were seen together on Princess Royal Island and Albert Land, the feathers of the latter lying about in profusion, and denoting that they pay dearly for frequenting such distinguished society.

The vessel was now caulked and painted, hatchways opened to dry long-accumulated damp between-decks; the holds were restowed, after provisions and stores had been surveyed; and lastly a close examination of the crew was made by the surgeon, Dr. Armstrong, and its result was most satisfactory. All were in most perfect health, not a trace of scurvy was detected among the men then on board; "an instance of sanitary well being," as Captain M'Clure justly observes, "unparalleled in the annals of polar voyages." May brought in a temperature ranging from 6° + to 30° + of Fahrenheit, the wind varying from S.W. to N.W., with occasional falls of snow. On the 6th of May Mr. Wynniatt's sledge-party returned to the ship: that officer had broken his chronometer, and wanted to be supplied with another; but there was not

a spare pocket-instrument on board, and Captain M'Clure, pained beyond measure at the loss of time already incurred by the return of this party from a position nine days' journey in advance of the ship, despatched Mr. Wynniatt again upon his original route during the course of the day. Mr. Wynniatt reported that throughout his journey traces of musk-oxen and deer had been very plentiful and fresh; and as the latter animal had also been seen upon the land abreast of the ship, two shooting parties were established to endeavour to secure an addition to the resources of the commissariat.

On May 7th a sad accident nearly occurred to a young carpenter named Whitefield, one of a shooting party on the western shore. A large flock of hares had been seen trooping up a ravine just as a heavy snow-storm set in, the rest of the sportsmen retired to their tent for safety, but Whitefield was tempted to go on. On being missed by the others, the men of the shooting party started two at a time to look for him, each relief running much risk of losing its way and being smothered in drift; yet nothing could be seen of the lost man. Fairly at their wits' end, the party, which was in charge of a petty officer, retreated to their tent

again, and began to fear the worst, when one of them suddenly exclaimed that he heard "the footsteps of a bear!" All heard the sound for a minute, and then it ceased. The drift was so dense they could see nothing; and to their shouts of "Whitefield!" no answer came. Shortly afterwards, during a lull in the gale, some one happened to look out of the tent; and there, not a yard from the tent, knelt poor Whitefield, stiff and rigid as a corpse, his head thrown back, his eyes fixed, his mouth open and filled with snow; his gun was slung over his shoulder, but his body was fast being buried in a snow-wreath. They pulled him into the tent, restored animation, and then sent for aid to the ship. When the man eventually recovered enough to tell his tale, it was strange indeed. He said that, whilst struggling with the snow-storm and endeavouring to find his way home, he felt a chill, and then a fit came on, which appeared to have deprived him of his senses to some extent, for he had seen people looking for him—some of them had even passed within a hundred yards of him—yet he could neither call them nor discharge his gun for a signal, and meantime the snow had covered him. After a while he regained some strength, and fortunately discovered a track leading to the tent, and

had actually almost reached it—indeed they were his footsteps that the people had heard—when again the fit came on, and he sank down a yard from the tent door, in the attitude of supplication in which he was found in the snow. He was fast becoming rigid, and freezing to death, when, by the mercy of Providence, his shipmates saw him. Among the startling narratives of arctic history, there are few more providential escapes.

The quantity of game, in the shape of hares and ptarmigan, seen in every direction by the different shooting parties, and recorded in Captain M'Clure's diary for May, was very wonderful in so high a latitude; but the sailors and marines, with one or two exceptions, were but poor sportsmen, the sum total of their contribution to the general stock being in four weeks but 156 ptarmigan and seven hares. Yet one valley visited by them was "literally alive with hares and ptarmigan," and large troops of the former were seen by all parties. Keener appetites, however, in following years made keener sportsmen, as we shall hereafter see.

May 20th.—The last of the winter's snow had disappeared from the western side of the strait, and from that rejoicing in a south-eastern aspect; but the opposite shore, which geologically speak-

ing was of the same formation, still wore a winter livery, owing to its facing the north-western part of the heavens; the advantage, here so apparent, of wintering upon a coast or in a harbour which looks to the southward, is a point which should be held well in mind by the polar navigator, if circumstances ever allow him to choose his winter quarters. At 8 A. M. on this day Lieut. Gurney Cresswell's party returned to the ship, after an absence of thirty-two days from the "Investigator." Lieut. Cresswell had searched 170 miles of the coast of Banks Land, from the ship, in a north and north-west direction. For the first fortnight the weather had been most severe, —constant north-west gales, dead in their teeth, sweeping through Barrow's Strait. Frost-bites had been frequent, but only two men became seriously attacked; and they, poor fellows, being affected in the feet in both cases, mortification of the extremities threatened, and Lieut. Cresswell had been obliged to listen to the dictates of humanity, and retreat upon the ship just as the weather was improving and the trend of the coast of Banks Land to the south convinced him it was an island. By this judicious step, however, the men's lives were saved, one only losing a portion of his feet;

but a day or two longer on the sledge would have been fatal to both.

The lieutenant found the north coast of Banks Land, west of Cape Russell, a precipitous cliff of limestone, varying from 1000 feet to 1500 feet in height; against the base, ice of an amazing thickness had been forced up, by a great north-west pressure, in lofty ridges. Outside this ridge the sledge had made its way for seventy miles, when the land became low at what appeared the western extreme of Barrow's Strait. Looking in that direction from a considerable elevation, nothing like land could be seen, the eye roamed over a vast sea of ice; it was again that "Land of the White Bear" spoken of by the natives of Cape Bathurst. On May 21st an extraordinary event occurred, which was not until afterwards explained. About 10.30 A.M. a large bear was passing the ship, when Captain M'Clure killed it on the spot with a rifle-shot. On examining the stomach, great was the astonishment of all present at the medley it contained.

There were *raisins*, that had not long been swallowed; a few small pieces of *tobacco*-leaf; bits of *pork* fat cut into cubes, which the ship's cook declared must have been used for

making mock-turtle soup, an article often found on board a ship in a preserved form; and, lastly, fragments of *sticking-plaster*, which, from the forms into which they had been cut, must evidently have passed through the hands of a surgeon. Captain M'Clure, ignorant at the time of the position of the other ships that had been despatched from England, surmised that there could only have been two ways in which these traces of civilisation in the bear's stomach could be accounted for; either by the bear having come over some floe of ice visited by the "Investigator" last autumn, or that the "Enterprise" was wintering close at hand. Now we know that the "Enterprise" was then in China, and it is hardly probable, bearing in mind the rapid crushing and churning of the ice, as described by Captain M'Clure, in the month of November 1850, that any of it should have escaped being rolled over more than once. The field for conjecture would therefore have been a wide one, had he, like ourselves at the present hour, known of the relative positions of Austin, Penny, and Rae's expeditions, as well as of the quarter from which proofs were brought in 1854 that Franklin's people had reached to. In such a case the most probable supposition would have been, that

from one or either of them Bruin had made his very extraordinary collection of curiosities. So impressed, indeed, was M'Clure with the idea that the "Enterprise" must be in the neighbourhood, that he despatched Lieut. Cresswell along the south-east shore of Banks Land, with a sledge provisioned until June 10th, to seek her.

After that officer had left the "Investigator," the bear's secret was revealed, for some sportsmen in search of game picked up a preserved-meat tin, around which there were many footprints of a bear; and upon examining its contents, they found therein articles corresponding with those discovered in the stomach of the animal shot on the 21st instant.

On May 24th, Her Most Gracious Majesty's birthday, the "Investigator" fired a royal salute where perhaps no salute will ever again be fired, and most certainly none was ever fired before. The thermometer, exposed to the sun, rose to-day to 73°+; in the shade it fell to 26°+. The first gull was observed on the 27th inst., a sure sign of cracks in the floe having already begun to show themselves. An early season it certainly was; and officers and men longed for the open water that was to lead them, as they hoped, to Lancaster Sound.

On May 29th the first-lieutenant's party was seen

approaching, and it reached the ship safely soon afterwards. Lieut. Haswell had been absent forty-seven days, and during that time he had searched a great extent of coast towards the south-east. He reached the extreme point of his journey on the 14th May, when his position was on the north shore of a deep indentation in Wollaston Land; his latitude and longitude being about 70° 45′ N., 114° W. By a remarkable coincidence, Dr. Rae, from his winter quarters in America, reached on the 24th of May, (exactly ten days later) a point on the opposite side of the same inlet, the "*extremes*" of the two travellers being thus only forty miles apart. On his homeward journey, Lieut. Haswell fell in with native Esquimaux, encamped upon the ice, at a place since named Berkeley Point, forming the southern head of the strait. Unable to converse with them but by signs, he pushed on for the ship; and directly Captain M'Clure heard of natives being so close, he made arrangements for going to communicate with them by the aid of Mr. Miercking, the Moravian interpreter, for until that moment no one had the least idea that they were wintering so near fellow-creatures.

It is true that every part of the coast about the

neighbourhood of Princess Royal Island abounded in Esquimaux ruins; but they were moss-grown and very ancient, and none of the natives of North America met by the Investigator's in the previous year spoke of having the least knowledge of land in the direction of Prince of Wales Strait.

On the 30th, Captain M'Clure and Mr. Mierching started, and on the 2nd June reached the Esquimaux encampment, consisting of five tents with as many men, five women, and a due proportion of children.

Three of the men were absent hunting; the remaining two received the visitors, answering to the first salute of Mierching with a cry of, "Oh! we are very much afraid! we are very much afraid!" as they probably were; but assurances of the good intentions of the Englishmen soon dissipated their fears. One of the hunters came in shortly afterwards. He is described as a fine, active broad-shouldered savage, with bow and quiver slung at his back, a large copper-bladed hunting knife in his hand, well clothed in seal skins, and his finely proportioned limbs neatly encased in beautifully-made mocassins and overalls. In fact, his appearance, combined with his confiding, frank, and friendly

manner, impressed all the party, and marked him as a favourable specimen of the hardy race which wanders over those frigid regions. Game, they said, such as the musk-ox and deer were very plentiful, but extremely wild. They assured Captain M'Clure of the continuity of the land he was now upon with that of Wollaston and Victoria, which faces the American shore in Dolphin and Union Strait. Esquimaux increased, they said, as you went to the south-east; and of all that portion of the coast visited by them they drew a very correct chart, handling pencil and paper as if they were accustomed to hydrography. Mr. Mierching understood them, and they him, perfectly, the dialect spoken by the tribe being the same as that of the Labrador coast. They seemed very simple and honest; and when presented with anything, they appeared incapable of supposing that anyone would give them an article without expecting an equivalent. A piece of red cloth having been tied by the Captain round the neck of a girl, she ran to the interpreter to know what was to be given in return for it; and when assured that it was a free gift, she gracefully acknowledged it by a smile, and wished to know "what kind of animal it grew upon."

These Esquimaux said that, until they had seen Lieut. Haswell's party, they had never cast eyes upon a white man,—proving pretty distinctly that the lost expedition never reached so far. Copper of the purest description seemed to be plentiful with them, for all their implements were of that metal; their arrows were tipped with it, and some of the sailors saw a quantity of it in a rough state in one of the tents. Bidding goodb-ye to these really interesting creatures, and promising them untold wealth in the shape of buttons and arms, Captain M'Clure returned to his ship more than ever convinced that if the Honourable Company under whose uncontrolled authority the northern portion of British America has passed as a "vested right," would, when seeking for furs and profits, take a somewhat more enlarged view of their position, and study a little the Christian ruler's duty towards such of their fellow-creatures as it has pleased God to place them in authority over, it would be better for them on that day of reckoning when the support of the great ones of this earth shall have as little weight as large dividends, or stock at a premium.

The sympathy awakened in the mind of Captain M'Clure for the lonely, expiring race of Esquimaux

was naturally increased by the isolated position of his ship and crew at this period.*

June 4th.—The ship was now surrounded by water, yet the ice of the strait was still seven feet in thickness. The 7th of the month brought back the sledge-party under Mr. Wynniatt; his turning-point was on the 26th May, at which time he was only fifty to sixty miles from the farthest point reached by a party under Lieut. Osborn from Griffith's Island. In both cases the land where each party turned back was strikingly similar, low, with off-lying shoals, and closely beset with stupendous ice. Since then, in the winter of 1853-54, two of Her Majesty's ships, the "Resolute" and "Intrepid," were caught in the pack, and wintered due north of this intervening fifty miles of ground: and although the wind blew fresh from the north and north-west, they did not drift through any channel in a southern direction; the natural inference therefore is, that the land from Cape Walker in Peel Sound to the Prince of Wales Strait is continuous. The drift chart of the "Resolute" and "Intrepid" is strong evidence, at any rate, in favour of such a theory.

* Captain Collinson, with his ship the "Enterprise," wintered in the same year, 1851–52, amongst these people; and all their intercourse was most friendly.

June is passing slowly, for the water does not make half fast enough for men tired of eight months' imprisonment; but the ice has diminished 2 ft. 10 in. in thickness in thirty days, and the water-pools upon the surface are extending towards one another, and boring holes through the floe beneath in all directions. The glistening hummocks are turning to a faded-yellow colour, and silently toppling to decay; the ducks, and geese, and swans fly cackling by, wondering perhaps whether the "Investigator" is an island on which it might be prudent to deposit their eggs, so as to secure them from the sly Renard who is eyeing them with a watering mouth, whilst the long-silent ravines burst out with a view halloo! and send glacier, snow, water, land, and stone, flying far over the floe which fringes either shore. But whilst we wait for the mysterious but certain motion of the ice-fields in the strait, which will release our travellers, let us cast a glance at the points reached during the past spring by the many parties pushing out from Griffith's Island and from Captain Penny's wintering-place in Barrow's Strait. Thanks to the close attention paid to the details of sledging by Lieut. M'Clintock* whilst

* The present Captain Leopold F. M'Clintock, R.N.

serving under Sir. James Ross, in 1848, and to the vast improvement his ingenuity enabled him to effect in it, the sledge-parties from Captain Austin's squadron were the most perfectly appointed that ever perhaps left on arctic service. The editor, who has since served in a squadron where an attempt was made to claim originality upon the head of equipment, feels it but justice to say, that every part of the sledge scheme carried out by Sir Edward Belcher's expedition in 1853 was grounded entirely upon Lieut. M'Clintock's original ideas. Here and there, though his suggestions were made use of, something was done to give an appearance of originality, but it was an appearance only; to Lieut. M'Clintock belonged the merit where there was any. Aided by this splendid equipment, which only required that more of the officers should have been as skilled as M'Clintock in turning them to advantage to have yielded still better results, the sledges from the "Resolute," "Assistance," "Pioneer," and "Intrepid" did an immense amount of work. The leading one, which carried off the palm in distance and value of service performed, was led by Lieut. M'Clintock in person to Melville Island; and about the same time when Lieut. Cresswell was standing on the north extreme of Banks Land,

Lieut. M'Clintock was on the southern promontory of Melville Island, some fifty or sixty miles from him.

On the south shore of Barrow's Strait, Captain Ommanney, of the "Assistance," was leading a party westward. At Peel Sound, he detached Lieut. Browne with two sledges, to examine that channel downwards, while from the American coast Dr. Rae afterwards came up it in a boat, and they approached each other, until their *extremes* were only 180 miles apart.

It is too late to regret it now; but had the whole strength of that division of sledges been turned upon Peel's Strait, we should then have reached King William's Land, and saved Franklin's crew. Alas! there was then a *furor* for Melville Island and for Banks Land; and all Captain Ommanney and his adviser, the writer of these pages, got for their forethought in heeding Peel's Strait at all, was a snubbing for not beating Lieut. M'Clintock. Captain Ommanney, anxious to pass nothing, went down another opening, fearing it might be a strait; and Lieut. Sherard Osborn pushed on with another sledge, as far as his provisions would allow him, turning back, as I have said, when about forty or fifty miles

from the point reached by Captain M'Clure's party.

Another sledge-party, under Lieut. Aldrich, searched far up to the northward by way of Byam Martin Channel, whilst Penny with boat and sledge opened up and examined Wellington Channel. Not a fresh vestige did these parties discover of Franklin's whereabouts, beyond the fact of his first winter quarters having been in Beechey Island; — and so little did the leaders of the expeditions from Baffin's Bay seem to think they were to work in combination with those who, as they knew, were pushing towards a central point from the Pacific Ocean, that they took the earliest advantage of open water to return to England, and strived to enlighten the world with what they *supposed* Franklin must have done after he left winter quarters at Beechey Island. Strange to say too, those whose position entitled their opinion to most weight, gave Franklin credit for everything but doing what he was *sent to do*, and *did do* — *discover a North-west Passage!* — a fact which Dr. Rae's discoveries in 1854 incontestably prove.

Before returning to the "Investigator," a glance must be cast in the direction of Behring's Strait. There we see the "Enterprise," Captain R. Col-

linson, C. B., pushing into the ice. On the 29th July, she rounded Point Barrow with some difficulty, and then, following the American shore on the footsteps of the "Investigator," we will leave her struggling with and mastering successfully the many dangers of that shoal coast and ponderous ice.

It is July in Prince of Wales Strait, the summer season of latitude 70° north: the "Investigator" has bent sails, hoisted up her boats, and keen eyes from the mast-head watch the daily increase of water, which is detaching the floe from either shore. The russet tints of the land on both shores have replaced the tiresome white of winter; the ravines are again silent, the *débâcle* has passed, and the waters only run now in modest trickling streams. Here and there along the edge of some deep cleft in the land, the white streak of a pigmy glacier shows where the summer heats cannot penetrate; but on the sunny slopes, or in sheltered valleys, the modest Flora of the North spreads her short-lived store —lichens and moss—in rich profusion of species and colour. The lovely golden hue of the anemone and poppy, the purple blossomed saxifrage, and white flowerets of the London-pride, appear inter-

laced with the rich green of the ground-willow, and rose-tinted leaves of sorrel, all relieve the wanderer's eye, and carry him back with softened feelings to some nook in his own dear land, where the flowers, and trees, and herbs, though far surpassing in loveliness those before him, are yet not half so much appreciated.

The plover, phalarope, and bunting, here rear their young untroubled by man: around the margin of the petty lakes formed by melting snow upon the terraces, wild-fowl of many sorts — the king and common eider, the pintail duck, and the Brent goose — form their simple nests, in spite of the prowling fox and piratical boatswain-bird (*Stercorarius parasitica*), the former in quest of the parent, and the latter of her eggs. And then along the face of some beetling cliff, which fronting to the south gives good promise of having water early at its base, clouds of shrieking gulls, kittiwakes, and burgomasters, hold a noisy parliament. There was no night to overshadow this scene: the sun rose high during the day along the southern half of the heavens, and sloped *without setting* towards the north until midnight. There was no darkness now, as during winter there had been no light. Yet it must not be supposed that in the

Arctic regions there is not a perceptible division of the day into that portion of it intended for labour and that for rest. Between the hours of eight in the evening and four in the morning, in spite of the sun sweeping through the heavens, there is a perceptible change; the light is more subdued, the tints of land and sea less strong, shadows less marked, the birds go as naturally to roost as if it was dark, and Nature is evidently reposing. Nothing can be more lovely than this Polar night, which is not night, or, as it has been beautifully described, "the long mild twilight, which, like a silver clasp, unites to-day with yesterday, when morning and evening sit together, hand in hand, beneath the starless sky of midnight." They who have once looked at such a landscape can never forget it, and though perhaps the penalties attached to a visit to these scenes may serve to check enthusiasm upon the subject of their attractions, yet those least susceptible to the impressions of the wonderful and beautiful, must, when standing among the marvels of those distant regions, have felt emphatically the truth of those eloquent sentences in our Bible in which the Creation is described, and every phase of it declared to be good and perfect.

There was great joy on board the "Investiga-

tor" from the 10th to the 14th of July. The floe had commenced moving and breaking up: a lane of water was seen extending on the former day along the western shore, to the northward. The ice in which the ship was still imprisoned on the eastern side drifted about a couple of miles, and then suddenly broke up, leaving her again free after being fixed to one spot for nearly ten months. The dangers of the navigation now recommenced; the ice was still very plentiful, and the clear water in very small patches; and as the pack drifted to and fro, all the helpless ship could do was to fasten to the strongest masses, and trust to their strength for safety from other fields of ice. The set of the currents or tides had long been an anxious question with Captain M'Clure: the tide-pole in thirty fathoms water was not a sure guide; but, so far as its help and twelve months' observation would allow him to form an idea, the flood-tide came from the south up the Strait, the rise and fall being about three feet at spring-tides, and little, if anything, at the neaps. The prevailing current, judging from drift-wood and other symptoms, was north-east along the eastern coast into Barrow's Strait, and on the opposite, or Banks Island shore, if anything, the current set

south-westerly. Tempted by the appearance of some clear water upon the western coast of the Strait, the "Investigator" on the 17th July cast off, and attempted to reach it. She was, however, caught by the pack-ice, and in a dense fog drifted with the crushing floes so close to Princess Royal Island as to hear the screams of the sea-fowl on the cliff; and, as had occurred in the previous autumn, she only escaped destruction by what seemed a miracle. After many a hair-breadth escape from shoals and nips in the ice, Captain M'Clure decided upon returning again to the eastern coast, and following it, God willing, into Barrow's Strait. On the 24th the first part of his object was accomplished, by crossing the Strait and reaching a spot named Cape Armstrong. Here such a quantity of drift-wood was seen upon the beach that a cutter was sent to embark a load. It was all American pine, some of it so fresh, that the carpenter was of opinion that it could not have been drifted from its native forest — either upon the banks of the Mackenzie or Copper-mine River — more than two years since.

A serious and alarming difficulty now added to the anxieties of our navigators. The compasses, without any apparent cause, became exceedingly

sluggish, and varied to such an extent in the dense fogs then prevailing, that it became impossible to tell which way they were going. The standard compass one day showed the ship's head to be N. whilst the starboard one pointed S.W. by W. ½ W., and the port compass remained obstinately at S. by W. Every care was taken to ascertain and remove the cause of this eccentricity in the needles, but it still remained. The "Investigator" now became again beset in the ice, and with slight intermission continued so until the 15th of August, during which time she drifted about two miles *per diem* to the north-east with it, and eventually reached 73° 43′ 43″ N. latitude, and longitude 115° 32′ 30″ W., in which position she remained at the tantalising distance of *twenty-five miles from the waters of Barrow's Strait!* Further than that, no effort could advance the ship, and there were occasional sets of the ice to the south-west, with N. E. winds, which threatened to send them back from whence they came. The young ice at nights had already begun to form, the sun set again, and Captain M'Clure knew that his days of navigation were every day diminishing. If he could push into the pack of Barrow's Strait, with a prospect of drifting with it to the eastward for Lancaster

Sound, he was prepared to do so; but it would be folly merely to get entangled in it at the entrance of Prince of Wales Strait, and be swept back again to winter, in 1851–52, in the same place he had occupied last year. Impressed with this feeling, it was with no small anxiety, when on the 16th of August, about noon, the fog lifted, that he proceeded to take a careful survey of the state of the ice ahead, before he decided upon launching into it, or adopting some other course by which to carry his ship through the north-west passage in safety; and to perfect upon one line at any rate the search for his missing brother officers. He says, "I observed the ice closely packed, extending across from one side of the Strait to the other:" it formed an unbroken line without a prospect of successful passage through it for a sailing ship, and then he immediately determined, with that decision which formed the secret of his wonderful success, to bear up, go round the south end of Banks Land, and endeavour, by rounding it to the westward, to reach Melville Island from that direction.

CHAP. XIV.

The "Investigator" bears up, and goes round the South End of Banks Land.—Rapid Progress up the Western Coast.—The Lane of Water diminishes.—Perilous Passage between the North-west Coast and ponderous Packed Ice.—Extraordinary Accidents and wonderful Preservation.—North-west Extreme of Banks Land.—Discovery of ancient Forests.—Arctic Lakes.—Fresh-Water Fish.—The "Investigator" drifts into the Pack in an Autumnal Gale.—Escapes and Struggles along-shore.—September Night Scene off Banks Land.—23rd September, 1851, run Ashore during the Night in the Bay of Mercy.—Ship Afloat.—Fail to get into the Pack of Barrow's Strait.—Winter Quarters, 1851-52.—Reduction of Allowance of Food.—Land found to abound in Game.—Want of good Hunters.—Acute Instinct of the Reindeer.—Arctic Hare, Wolf, and Fox.—Continued good Health of the Crew.—Cleverness of the Arctic Raven.—Violence of Winter Snow-Storms.—Christmas-Day.—The Arrival of H. M. S. "Enterprise" in Prince of Wales Strait.—She fails in rounding Banks Land,—and Winters at the Esquimaux Settlement in Walker Bay.

The helm of the "Investigator" was "put up:" the good ship that had so gallantly striven to escape by the northern outlet of the Strait, by which the existence of a north-west passage had been discovered, wore round upon her keel, set all sail,

and sped rapidly to the south-west, passing Princess Royal Island for the last time. The officers and crew were astonished to find that not a particle of ice was to be met; floes, hummocks, huge piles of ice that had fringed the coast, all had disappeared! After a run of 100 miles in clear water, the 17th August found them passing the majestic cliffs of Nelson Head, the southern extreme of Banks Land, the land preserving the same bold features for 25 miles to the westward, where it terminated at Cape Hamilton: here they encountered a heavy swell from the S. E. with a fine breeze, which made the "Investigator" throw up her heels, much to the delight of those who were on board. Gradually turning to the north-west, and then north, Banks Land was found again to resume in some measure the same undulating features and long sloping beach that characterised its eastern coast. Considerable quantities of drift-wood lay on the beaches north of Cape Hamilton; much vegetation was seen, and numerous flocks of wild swans and geese were feeding along the shore. On the 18th of August the "Investigator" had run the extraordinary distance, in such a latitude, of 300 miles, without being once checked by ice. The pack on this day

was seen hanging in a heavy body in the south-west, leaving, however, a lane of six miles of clear water between it and the shore. In the afternoon Cape Kellett was rounded, with some little difficulty, the ship passing, with sufficient water to float her, between the edge of grounded ice and the coast. The land was now so low that the hand lead-line became for a while their best guide, the soundings happily were regular, and, aided by it and a fair wind, they advanced apace to the northward: throughout the 19th the ship sometimes ran as much as seven knots per hour, the width of the lane of water in which they were sailing varying from three to five miles. Noon that day found them in 73° 55′ north latitude, and 123° 52′ 30″ west longitude, and already did Captain M'Clure count upon extending his voyage to the north of Melville Island, and then striking for some Strait or Sound leading into Baffin's Bay!

That night, however, a sudden and remarkable change took place. They had just crossed Burnet Bay, within Norway and Robilliard Island, when the coast suddenly became as abrupt and precipitous as a wall; the water was very deep, sixty fathoms by the lead-line within 400 yards of the face of the cliffs, and fifteen fathoms water

when actually touching them. The lane of water had diminished to 200 yards in width where broadest; and even that space was much hampered by loose pieces of ice aground or adrift. In some places the channel was so narrow that the quarter boats had to be topped up to prevent them touching the cliffs upon the one hand, or the lofty ice upon the other; and so perfectly were they running the gauntlet, that on many occasions the ship could not "round-to," for want of space. Their position was full of peril, yet they could but push on, for retreat was now as dangerous as progress. The pack was of the same fearful description as that they had fallen in with in the offing of the Mackenzie River, during the previous autumn; it drew forty and fifty feet water, and rose in rolling hills upon the surface, some of them 100 feet from base to summit. Any attempt to force the frail ship against such ice was of course mere folly: all they could do was to watch for every opening, trust in the goodness and mercy of God, and push ahead in the execution of their duty. If the ice at such a time had set in with its vast force against the sheer cliff, nothing, they all felt, could have saved them; and nothing in the long tale of Arctic research is finer than the cool and

resolute way in which all, from the captain to the youngest seaman of this gallant band, fought inch by inch to make their way round this frightful coast.

Enough has been said to give a correct idea of the peril incurred at this stage of the voyage, without entering into minute details of the hair-breadth escapes hourly taking place; but one instance may be given as a sample of the rest. After the 20th of August, the "Investigator" lay helplessly fixed off the north-west of Banks Land; the wind had pressed in the ice, and for awhile all hopes of farther progress were at an end. On the 29th of August, however, a sudden move took place, and a moving floe struck a huge mass to which the ship had been secured; and, to the horror of those on board, such was the enormous power exerted, that the mass slowly reared itself on its edge, close to the ship's bows, until the upper part was higher than the fore-yard, and every moment appeared likely to be the "Investigator's" last; for the ice had but to topple over, to sink her and her crew under its weight. At the critical moment there was a shout of joy, for the mass, after oscillating fearfully, broke up, rolled back in its original position, and they were saved! Hardly,

however, was this danger past than a fresh one threatened, for the berg to which the ship was secured was impelled forward by the whole weight of the driving pack towards a low point of land, on which with frightful pressure the great floes were breaking up, and piling themselves tier upon tier. The "Investigator" had no power of escape; but every hawser was put in requisition, and hands stationed by them. An attempt to blow up a grounded berg, upon which the ship was driving, only partially succeeded; the nip came on, the poor ship groaned, and every plank and timber quivered from stem to stern in this trial of strength between her and the ice. "Our fate seemed sealed," says Captain M'Clure, and he made up his mind to let go all hawsers. The order was given, and with it the wreck of the "Investigator" seemed certain: all the leader hoped for was, to use his own words, "that we might have the ship thrown up sufficiently to serve as an asylum for the winter:" if she should sink between the two contending bergs, the destruction of every soul was inevitable.

But at the very moment when the order to "let go all hawsers" was given, and even before it could be obeyed, a merciful Providence caused the berg

which most threatened to break up, and the "Investigator" was once more saved; though still so tightly was she beset, that there was not room to drop a lead-line down round the vessel, and the copper upon her bottom was hanging in shreds, or rolled up like brown paper.

They were now upon the north-west extreme of Banks Land, and whilst detained in this dangerous locality, officers and men rambled into the interior, which they found far from so sterile as the view of it from the sea had led them to expect. Traces of musk oxen and deer abounded, and both were seen; but perhaps the most extraordinary discovery of all was a great accumulation of fossil trees, as well as fragments not fossilised, lying over the whole extent of the land, from an elevation of 300 feet above the sea to its immediate level. Writing on the 27th of August, Captain M'Clure, speaking of this wood, says, "I walked to-day a short distance into the interior: the snow that had fallen last night lay unthawed upon the high grounds, rendering the prospect most cheerless. The hills are very remarkable, many of them peaked, and standing isolated from each other by precipitous gorges: the summits of these hills are about 300 feet high, and nothing

can be more wildly picturesque than the gorges which lie between them. *From the summit of these singularly formed hills to their base abundance of wood is to be found, and in many places layers of trees are visible, some protruding twelve or fourteen feet, and so firm that several people may jump on them without their breaking: the largest trunk yet found measured one foot seven inches in diameter.*"

Again, on September 5th, some miles from the hills just alluded to, Captain M'Clure says: "*I entered a ravine some miles inland, and found the north side of it, for a depth of forty feet from the surface, composed of one mass of wood similar to what I had before seen. The whole depth of the ravine was about 200 feet. The ground around the wood or trees was formed of sand and shingle; some of the wood was petrified, the remainder very rotten, and worthless even for burning.*"

This remarkable phenomenon opens a vast field for conjecture, and the imagination becomes bewildered in trying to realise that period of the world's history when the absence of ice and a milder climate allowed forest trees to grow in a region where now the ground-willow and dwarf birch have to struggle for existence. At a subsequent period to that we are speaking of, Lieut. Mecham

discovered a similar kind of fossil forest nearly 120 miles farther north.*

On the 1st September, winter appeared to have overtaken the "Investigator" in her forlorn position. From the highest land near them the officers and men had in vain looked out over the pack, for the hope of release which even a yard of water would afford: all was ice over the surface of that really frozen sea. Keen and strong already came the north-west wind. What would it be in the depth of winter? they asked each other with a shudder. The wild-fowl had nearly all gone south; and the gallant little snow-buntings were muster-

* In the spring of 1853, one of the sledge-parties under Lieut. Meeham, of H. M. S. "Resolute," was travelling across the newly discovered island called after H. R. H. Prince Patrick. When in 76° 15′ N. latitude, and 121° 40′ W. longitude, he says: —

"Tuesday, May 31st.—Discovered buried in the east bank of the ravine, and protruding about eight feet, a tree of considerable size. During the afternoon, I found several others of a similar kind: circumference of first and second tree seen, three feet; of another, two feet ten inches. From the perfect state of the bark, and the position of the trees so far from the sea, there can be but little doubt that they grew originally in this country. I sawed one through: it appeared very close-grained, and was so immensely heavy that we could carry but little of it away."

ing to depart likewise. The prospect was not cheering; yet none could complain, for they had come a marvellous distance in the short navigable season of the polar seas, and the distance yet to be accomplished to reach those waters which had been traversed by ships from the direction of Baffin's Bay was small indeed compared with that already passed. As his vessel was squeezed up and cradled in ice about fifty yards off the shore, Captain M'Clure expected to have to winter thus; and in order that he might be able to afford his men rest hereafter, he commenced at once collecting ballast from the beach, a circumstance which gave that part of Banks Land the name of Ballast Beach. It is in lat. 74° 25′ N., long. 122° W. The prospect in nowise improved between the 1st and the 10th of September. The temperature had fallen to 16° + Fahr., or 16° of frost; and the aurora-borealis flickered its pale light at night through the cold heavens; everything spoke of winter; yet the position of the ship was too insecure a one to justify the Captain in making any of the preparations for sheltering the men from its rigour, such as clearing decks and spreading housing, lest some fresh movement in the ice should require the vessel to be again placed under

canvas *, — a wise precaution, which, as we shall see, enabled him to reach secure winter quarters, and saved his ship.

Amongst other remarkable proofs that the daily excursions of men and officers brought to light, of the land, barren as it was, possessing considerable resources in the shape of animal life, the discovery of lakes with fish in them was not the least worthy of note. Two of these lakes had attracted the attention of the officers, from the extraordinary fact that, although within 100 yards of each other and possessing exactly the same aspect, yet one of them was firmly frozen over, while the other had not a particle of ice upon its surface. The only respect in which they were found to differ in relative position was, that the unfrozen lake was ten feet nearer the level of the sea than the other, and its depth was six fathoms, whilst that of the frozen lake was but five, — a difference, however, which could hardly ac-

* In the winter of 1853-54, H. M. S. "Assistance" and "Pioneer" were similarly caught by ice and westerly winds in Wellington Channel; but the absence of equal judgment and foresight, on the part of Captain Sir E. Belcher, nearly caused the total loss of the "Assistance," and by occasioning the vessels to winter there, instead of taking advantage of the open water that afterwards offered, caused the eventual desertion of both vessels by that officer.

count for the fact, the water in both being remarkably pure, and the temperature by thermometer differing only 1°. When Captain M'Clure visited the lakes on the 6th instant, he found both frozen over; but the ice in the lower one was only half the thickness of that in the upper; and, to add to the interest attached to this little freak of nature, the lower lake was full of fish—salmon-trout, varying from three inches to a foot in length—whilst the upper one had not a living creature in it. The exquisite transparency of the young fresh-water ice enabled him to ascertain this fact as easily as if he had been looking through a crystal.

Ancient traces of the Innuit or Esquimaux were found here, showing that, even in this remote corner, that extraordinary race of hunters and fishers had not failed at one time to extend their wanderings; and not far from these ruins of huts and *caches*, some more hills were discovered in which there existed a considerable stratum of wood, "with trees," says Captain M'Clure, "of considerable length and diameter projecting from the sides of the hills, and that too, in a state of preservation which rendered them not unfit for firewood."

On the 10th September, the wind veered to

the southward, the temperature rose, and at midnight the ice went off from the coast, without the slightest warning, carrying the poor "Investigator" with it, and handing her thus over to the tender mercies of the much dreaded pack in the offing. Fortunately the ship was on its weather edge, although so cradled in ice under her bottom as to be helpless, and painful were the feelings of all on board of her until their position was ascertained at daylight; but amid the roar of the gale and tossing of the floes which had caused this sudden danger, the firm hand of the leader wrote in his diary: —

"Thus we launch into this formidable frozen sea. *Spes mea in Deo.*"

Daylight showed them to be drifting north-east, one mile off shore, in 100 fathoms of water, at the rate of about a mile an hour. So far it was consolatory; but the object was to free the ship, and to secure her in some nook in the land or land-ice, as soon as it threatened to close in upon the shore, which it assuredly would do when the southerly gale abated in the least. By dint of enormous charges of powder, placed under and amongst the ice which held the "Investigator," this object was at last effected, at a time when

neither hawsers, saws, nor chisels were found of the slightest avail. Launching once more into her own element, the "Investigator" struggled on during the day, and, as night closed in, sought shelter amongst the grounded ice. Another night and a day of continued danger and anxiety followed; for the wind slackened, and the pack again rolled along the coast, pivoting upon the grounded pieces, and threatened, as it pulverized or threw masses thirty or forty feet thick high up on the beach, or a-top of one another, to occasion a like catastrophe to their frail bark. Through the long dark night, the sullen grinding of the moving pack, and the loud report made by some huge mass of ice which burst under the pressure, boomed through the solitude, and as the starlight glimmered over the wild scene to seaward, the men could just detect the pack rearing and rolling over, by the alternate reflected lights and shadows. It was a time to try every nerve; and fervently all prayed for some providential circumstance to place them in a haven of security for the winter. That prayer was at last answered; for, having once more freed the ship from the ice which surrounded her, in order that a lane of water stretching eastward might be turned to advantage, the 19th of

September saw the "Investigator" again progressing along the coast. Fifteen miles were accomplished, and at night the vessel was secured as far as circumstances would admit of. Two whales, the first seen for a very long time, passed them on this day, and appeared to be going westward. Next day, struggling with a succession of difficulties which nothing but the unparalleled gallantry and zeal of every soul in the ship enabled them to surmount, the "Investigator" reached a headland since called Cape Austin; and here she was secured again, near a place where the floes had run up a steep slope of the land to the height of seventy feet.

On the 22nd, this cape was rounded, and the voyagers immediately found the appearance of the ice less formidable, and all breathed afresh at the feeling that they were now fairly in the *waters of Barrow's Strait!* Whilst pushing slowly on, two small bays were seen, but so choked up with old ice as to render it impossible for shelter to be found there. Some idea may be formed of the narrow strip of water along which the "Investigator" was seeking her way, from the fact that on one occasion, as they approached a cape, the lower studding-sail boom had to be "*topped up*" to allow

the vessel to pass through a crack (for it was nothing else) between the steep cliffs on the one hand and the floes upon the other.

The 23rd of September, 1851, the last day of the gallant ship's achievements, came in most promisingly. Water was seen ahead long before daydawn, sail was set, and she battled on all day to the eastward, making a little southing, as the land trended that way. Hitherto Captain M'Clure had avoided pushing on at night, since they had become so dark and so long; but for many cogent reasons he was induced to-day to depart from this rule; and, as the result proved, it was unfortunate in one respect that he did so, for about half-past seven o'clock in the evening the ship ran ashore on a steep bank. The crew strained every nerve to get the vessel off; and after clearing the fore hold and store-rooms, and laying out a stream-anchor and cable, she floated off during the night.

On the next day they found themselves in a large bay, affording good winter quarters, and perceived that it was impossible to round its north-eastern horn, so as to enter the pack and drift with it through Barrow's Strait during the coming winter. Under these circumstances, and considering what they had gone through in

reaching the secure spot into which they had steered during darkness, Captain M'Clure made up his mind to winter where he was; and, in token of his gratitude to a kind Providence, the bay was appropriately called the Bay of Mercy. It was no empty expression; for every heart in that ship was filled with emotion, and many prayed that in after years, should they be spared to reach their homes, the recollection of the bounty and goodness of Him who had upheld them through such anxieties and dangers, might never be effaced from their memories.

Winter came on apace, but the Investigators were ready for it now. With slight exceptions, the arrangements were much the same as those of 1850–51; and, to judge from appearances, it seemed that all were quite as well able to scorn its rigour as they had been on the first occasion. As a precaution, however, to meet the possible contingency of an escape from the polar regions not being effected in the forthcoming year, the painful but necessary measure was adopted of reducing the allowance of food per diem, of the ship's company. Captain M'Clure ordered that officers and men should be placed upon two-thirds of their ordinary rations: but, happily, at this

time it was discovered that the land teemed with deer and hares; and although the want of professional hunters caused the loss of many a fine herd of deer, yet when the winter set in, in addition to small birds, nine deer and fifty-three hares had been shot, their flesh adding to the resources of the ship. The interior of the land, so far as the walks of the sportsmen carried them, appeared well fitted to support the hardy animals of that latitude. Broad plains of dwarf willow, reindeer moss, and the coarse grasses of the North were seen; and the herds of deer and troops of hares which were daily reported seemed perfectly marvellous to those who had hitherto believed that little if any animal life existed so far north. The above-mentioned animals, as well as the ptarmigan, never, in fact, left the neighbourhood of Mercy Bay even in the depth of winter; and it was only the cold and darkness which prevented their being shot at that season. It would take a volume to describe the novel and interesting habits of these animals, as observed by those who sojourned in Mercy Bay. Pressed by the requirements of such a climate, the instincts of all animals seem more acute than those of similar creatures placed in more favoured climes. They were watchful and

wary to a surprising degree; and as they were protected by the open nature of the country, the sportsmen could not always get even within rifle distance of the deer, although they probably had never seen a human being before, whilst, strangely enough, these herds appeared to entertain no fear of the half dozen wolves which always lay round them, ready to cut off a straggler, or pick up a giddy fawn.

The arctic reindeer at this season congregate in large promiscuous herds of bucks, does, and fawns, probably for warmth and protection; and, strangely enough, the hares do so likewise. Some troops of the latter were seen, numbering 150 at least; and the roads made by the march of their numbers through the snow were beaten as hard as ice. I am not aware that this herding of hares, or the fact of the female bearing six or seven young at a litter, has been before noticed.

Apart from the difficulty of stalking down the deer, the presence of the wolves and foxes was found to be a serious drawback; for if a deer was shot and left on the ground, by the time the sportsman had obtained sufficient aid to transport the meat on board, little beyond the head and shin-bones would be left undevoured, and the

robber wolves, too, taking care to keep out of gun-shot, would howl most dismally, as if mocking the disappointment of the hunter.

As cold and darkness increased, and the absence of the sun rendered it unsafe for the crew to leave the vicinity of the ship, the wolves, pressed by cold and hunger, used to haunt her to a disagreeable extent; and the sad prolonged howl of these gaunt creatures in the long nights added, if possible, to the dismal character of the scene. The Investigators vowed vengeance on these creatures, which, as they declared, not only behaved in a most unsportsman-like, not to say dishonest manner, but strove to disturb their rest besides. A great deal of snow fell this autumn,—a certain indication of much moisture in the atmosphere, arising from evaporation from the sea, and also that a considerable amount of water had existed amongst the pack this season, and perhaps might do so still, though useless for all navigable purposes. In November the temperature fell to 40° — during the month, the lowest, perhaps, ever registered at so early a season, and augured a fearful state of things at a later date. The crew were, however, generally in capital health, and actuated by the same fine spirit which had

carried them through so many difficulties, and endeared them so much to their captain and officers. Two ravens now established themselves as friends of the family in Mercy Bay, living mainly by what little scraps the men might have to throw away after meal-times. The ship's dog, however, looked upon these as his especial perquisites, and exhibited considerable energy in maintaining his rights against the ravens, who nevertheless outwitted him in a way which amused everyone. Observing that he appeared quite willing to make a mouthful of their own sable persons, they used to throw themselves intentionally in his way just as the mess-tins were being cleaned out on the dirt-heap outside the ship. The dog would immediately run at them, and they would just fly a few yards; the dog then made another run, and again they would appear to escape him but by an inch, and so on, until they had tempted and provoked him to the shore, a considerable distance off. Then the ravens would make a direct flight for the ship, and had generally done good execution before the mortified-looking dog detected the imposition that had been practised upon him, and rushed back again.

December came in with those tremendous snow

storms which are perhaps the most frightful visitations of polar regions. All the Investigators could do was to remain shut up in the ship, and wonder what the animals of Banks Land did in a snow-drift which almost tore the housing from its many fastenings. A solid moving body of snow rolled along higher than the topmast heads, and when it met the impediment of the ship, formed a wreath to windward, and became piled rapidly up over her, until the weight of accumulated snow broke down the floe in which the ship was frozen; the inclination of the ship first one way, then another, and the report made by the cracking of the ice under her bottom, startling those unaccustomed to such accidents. An odd atmospheric condition, which has elsewhere been experienced, was observed by Captain M'Clure in one of the storms which occurred on the 5th of December. The barometer rose to 30·81 higher than it had before been since leaving England; and the aneroid, graduated to 31·50, stood so high that it could not be registered for four days. In a similar storm early the following year, the barometer rose above 31 inches.

The second Christmas-day was passed in the ice, in a manner to call forth the Captain's highest encomiums on his noble ship's company, who

behaved, he says, in the most exemplary and satisfactory manner. "After divine service, all went for a short walk until the dinner-hour; from then until bedtime, dancing, skylarking, and singing were kept up on the lower deck with unflagging spirit, good humour, cheerfulness, and propriety; not a man was inebriated, although, with other additions to the daily fare, amongst which was a pound of the most delicious venison to each person, an extra allowance of grog was issued. Would that the happiness of our little community upon the lower deck of the 'Investigator' could have been witnessed by those anxious for our welfare at home! they would scarcely imagine, otherwise, that the crew of a vessel two years upon her own resources in these ice-bound regions, could create such a scene of enjoyment amidst so many gloomy influences." And, as if to countersign this opinion of their chief, several of the petty officers assured him afterwards that, during many years' service in Her Majesty's navy, they had never passed a happier Christmas, or one in which there had been a feeling of more perfect unanimity and good-will, — a feeling shared by every seaman and marine in the ship's company.

The officers dined with Captain M'Clure, off a

splendid haunch of a Banks Land reindeer weighing about twenty pounds, with at least two inches of fat on it; and it was pronounced to be most deliciously-flavoured meat. In short, the year 1851 went out with every pleasing prospect; and in spite of the reduced allowance of food upon which all had then been for three months, no one was repining or discontented.

On Christmas-day of the previous winter, it will be remembered that the many ships, which left England and America in 1850 to rescue Franklin's Expedition, were wintering in different parts of the arctic regions; but out of all these the "Investigator" and the "Enterprise" now alone remained. At page 194. we left that ship, after having rounded the difficult turning-point of Cape Barrow, progressing eastward along the American shore. As in the "Investigator's" case, Captain Collinson found the water to make along-shore in a lane whose breadth depended upon the position of the different rivers discharging themselves into the Polar Sea; and in their vicinity destroying the packed ice, or forcing it off to seaward by the strength of their currents.

The "Enterprise," when off Cape Parry (the promontory which divides the waters of the Copper-

mine from those of the Mackenzie River), saw to the northward the southern extremity of Banks Land—the Nelson Head of M'Clure. Steering across for it, Captain Collinson, when under that coast, by a strange combination of circumstances, steered up Prince of Wales Strait, and there on Princess Royal Island discovered the "Investigator's" depôt, and a cairn containing information up to the 15th June 1851. Passing on after this discovery, the "Enterprise" on the 30th August reached the north end of the strait, but only to be foiled, as the "Investigator" was, in any attempt to pass beyond it. Captain Collinson then decided upon taking a course exactly similar to the one pursued by his more fortunate predecessor, and, bearing away, rounded Nelson Head, with the intention of struggling along that western route by which M'Clure had a fortnight earlier successfully carried his ship. On September 3rd, the Captain little thinking of the "Investigator" having preceded him in his intended course, was astonished to find on Cape Kellett a record placed there on August the 18th. The ice was now too close in for the "Enterprise" to push on; and no harbour fit for winter quarters offering itself as high as latitude 72° 54′ north, Captain Collinson

bore up, and eventually wintered his ship on the eastern side of the entrance of Prince of Wales Strait, close to the spot where Esquimaux had been found by Lieutenant Haswell, as we have elsewhere related, during his sledge-journey in the spring. From Walker Bay, as their winter quarters was named, Collinson, after passing his first winter in safety, despatched in the coming spring his sledge-parties; but, unfortunately for them, the labours of Captain M'Clure's parties, and Dr. Rae's exertions, prevented any new ground being reached by any of them, neither did they discover the winter quarters of the "Investigator," although, as will hereafter be related, a party which reached Melville Island must at one time have crossed the track of Captain M'Clure's sledge when he likewise made a trip to Winter Harbour. Having thus connected the stories of the two ships, and shown the relative positions of the only vessels of the searching expedition left at that time in the polar seas, we must return again to the Bay of Mercy.

CHAP. XV.

The New Year, 1852.—Satisfactory State of the Crew—Deer obtained directly the Light admitted of their being seen.—Sergeant Woon, of the Royal Marines, saves the Life of a Shipmate.—Keen Sportsmen.—Wolves.—Boatswain's Adventure with them.—Spring.—Captain M'Clure visits Winter Harbour, Melville Island.—Finds neither Provisions nor Vessel to help him.—His Return.—Finds large Quantities of Venison had been procured.—Scurvy makes its Appearance.—Increased Number of sick.—Unfavourable Weather in July.—Venison expended.—Wild Sorrel found in great Quantities for a short Period.—10th August.—Water seen in Barrow's Strait.—Measures taken in case of being able to Escape.—Relapse in the Weather.—Gloomy Prospect.—An early Winter commences.—Measures taken to save Ship and Crew, in the Event of another similar Season in 1853.—Cheerful Conduct of the Crew.—Short Rations.—Mode of Living.—Banian Days and Festivals.—Christmas and Conclusion of Year 1852.

The year 1852 came in with a keen and steady cold of from seventy to eighty degrees below the freezing point of water,—a temperature which severely tests the vital energies of man. The weather was still what would be called fine; that is, the wind was light, and a considerable aurora relieved the darkness in a slight degree. The Investigators met

the cold as it should be met, with cheerfulness, energetic exercise, and regularity of habits; and consequently New Year's day found but four trifling cases upon the doctor's sick list,—a satisfactory sanitary state, which continued throughout the spring. Directly the daylight began to increase and the crew were able to extend their walks, they fell in with reindeer in great numbers. Some of the poor creatures, attracted by curiosity, or pressed by the wolves eternally dogging at their heels, occasionally approached the ship as if for protection, but only, of course, to be fired at. Before the close of January several were shot, and their flesh secured; and, according to the diary of an officer, "the hills in the vicinity of the ship were abounding at that time with deer."

Every encouragement was now given to men and officers who were prepared to undergo the fatigue of sporting for the public weal. One person especially distinguished himself not only as a sportsman, but in the execution of any service requiring unflagging energy and marked intelligence; and this was the non-commissioned officer of royal marines, Sergeant Woon. He did good service everywhere; but no better instance of the metal such as he are made of can be given than one which occurred on the 4th of January.

A coloured man serving in the ship, whilst out sporting, wounded a deer, and, after following it awhile, discovered he had lost his way, just as a fog came on. The temperature was very low, the man was tired; and the peril of his position caused him to lose his presence of mind and to wander about. By great good fortune Sergeant Woon, who was likewise out in quest of game, saw him and joined him; but the sergeant found the poor creature so beside himself with excitement and horror, that every endeavour to soothe him, by promising to take him safely on board the ship, failed. Fits came on, which, when they passed off, left the man quite prostrated in strength. By entreaty and remonstrance, the sergeant induced him at last to walk a little; but at 2 P.M., when the short day of that period was fast closing in, the unfortunate man's energies entirely failed, and he sank upon the ground, bleeding at mouth and nose, and writhing in convulsions. The sergeant saw now that all hope of the man saving himself was at an end; and to leave him where he was, many miles from the ship, was to leave him to certain death: he would have been devoured by the wolves even before the process of freezing to death would have released him from his misery. There was no alternative but to drag him

to the ship,—no easy matter, when the sergeant dared not part with his gun, and the man was one of the heaviest of a fine ship's company. Sergeant Woon, then, with heroic resolution set to his task. Slinging both muskets over his shoulder, he took the man's arms round his own neck, and commenced dragging his half-dead shipmate towards the "Investigator." The labour was, as may be supposed, excessive; and the only relief the sergeant had was, whenever he had dragged the body up one side of a hill, or when he came to a ravine, to lay him down, and roll him to the bottom; rather severe treatment for an invalid, but it had the merit of arousing the man somewhat from his lethargy. By eleven o'clock at night the gallant marine had thus conveyed his burden to within a mile of the ship; but ten hours of such toil, amid darkness, cold, and snow, now began to tell upon him likewise. He found he could drag his burden no longer; and as a last resource he implored the unfortunate man to make an effort, and tried to cheer him by pointing to the rockets which the Captain of the "Investigator" caused to be thrown up as a guide to the missing men. Seeing, however, that all his entreaties were replied to only by a request "to be left alone to die," the sergeant laid him in

a bed of deep snow, and started off for assistance from the ship. This was already on its way; and Woon met and conducted two out of three parties to where the man lay, and just in time to save him. He was found with his arms raised, and rigid in that position, his eyes open, and his mouth so firmly frozen as to require much force to open it for the purpose of pouring restoratives down his throat, whilst his hands, feet, and face were much frost-bitten. His life was, however, saved; and for that the courage and devotion displayed by the sergeant deserved all the credit.

On February the 5th the sun was seen above the horizon to the southward, by those whose anxiety to welcome back its cheerful face induced to climb the adjacent hills; and in the course of a day or two it gladdened the Bay of Mercy. The sportsmen now became more successful, and seldom a day passed without a deer or hare being shot; and keen must the hunger of those sportsmen have been, for more than one of them, when after a long and weary walk he shot a deer or hare, refreshed himself by drinking the hot blood, or eating a mouthful or two of the raw meat. They found no ill consequences ensue from the unpleasant food. Now and then a few

days' holiday had to be given to the game to prevent it being too much scared,—a prudent measure which always appeared to bring the creatures back to their old feeding ground. The wolves, encouraged, no doubt, by the feeding they got from the wounded animals, which, although strong enough to escape the sportsmen, fell eventually to their share, became exceedingly bold; and five of them attempted to cut out the Esquimaux dog that had long been the pet of the "Investigator." One of these brutes was a perfect giant, standing nearly four feet high at the shoulder, and leaving a footmark as big as a reindeer's. Many a scheme was tried to shoot these wary creatures; but all failed, this season, while some of the encounters with them were disagreeably close and the risk somewhat great. Perhaps one of the strangest was that of Mr. Kennedy (boatswain), who, whilst out shooting early in April, broke at a shot two out of four legs of a fine buck. Evening coming on, and knowing the animal could not go far, he returned to the ship, and next morning early started to secure his game. Arriving at the place, he was disgusted to find five large wolves and several foxes in possession of the deer; but, determined to have his share

of the spoil, the boatswain advanced, shouting and calling them by every strong term he could muster, yet afraid to fire his single-barrelled gun at one, for fear of the rest doing as much to him as they had done to the buck, especially as they appeared inclined to show fight, and made no sign of retreat until he was within four yards of them. Even then only four of them moved off, and sat down a pistol-shot off, howling most dismally. "Pipes" picked up a leg of the deer, which had been dismembered, and then grasped one end of the half-picked carcase, whilst a large female wolf tugged against him at the other! The position was, to say the least of it, a disagreeable one; and if the music of the four wolves had brought others of their fraternity to the rescue, the consequences of a struggle between hungry wolves and a no less hungry sailor might have been serious. Fortunately Mr. Mierching, the interpreter, who was out shooting likewise on an adjacent hill, had his attention attracted by the howling of the brutes, and came to the rescue. He described the scene as the strangest he ever saw; and so close were Mr. Kennedy and the wolf in their struggle for the meat, that he fancied the animal had actually attacked the boatswain. Seeing more bipeds ap-

proaching, all the wolves now decamped, saving their skins as usual, and leaving the poor boatswain only twenty pounds weight of meat instead of the 120 pounds which his prize ought to have weighed.

The rapid rise of the temperature in April decided Captain M'Clure upon preparing to start for Melville Island with a sledge, in the hope of finding some of Captain Austin's ships, or of ascertaining what depôt of provisions had been placed there by Captain Austin, so as to secure a retreat should the "Investigator" not escape from her present position. Everything being in readiness, the sledge, with six men and the Captain, left the "Investigator" on April 11th, 1852. The journey was a trying one; for a relapse in the temperature took place just afterwards, and continued until the 25th. The pack, moreover, offered a sadly rough road. Winter Harbour was reached at an early hour on the 28th of April; and sorely disappointed was Captain M'Clure as well as his crew, at not finding either vessel or provisions; and the hope of one or the other coming to them hereafter vanished when he read the notice left by Lieut. M'Clintock, dated June 6th, 1851. Captain M'Clure consoled himself with the consideration that he had at all events

discovered this fact before any accident had happened to his ship, for otherwise "I should," says he, "most decidedly and with the fullest confidence of meeting succour, have pushed for Winter Harbour; and if the 'Enterprise' gets into difficulties, Captain Collinson will, I am fully persuaded, do the same." Shortly after this visit of Captain M'Clure to Winter Harbour, a party from the "Enterprise," under Lieut. Parks, did reach Melville Island also, and must have crossed the trail of M'Clure, for Mr. Parks saw, one day, at or near Point Hearne the marks of a sledge and the footprints of men; and that neither party should know of the other being so close, is a strong proof, to be added to the many extant, of the difficulty of meeting one another in a climate like that of these frozen regions.

Disappointed, but not desponding, the leader of the party turned his back upon the old winter quarters of the gallant Parry, and prepared to lead his men back to their lonely home;—nay, so far was he then from even contemplating a necessity for leaving the "Investigator," that on his return journey across the strait between Melville Island and Banks Land, we find the following remark:—"When going towards Melville Island, we were

much delayed by stupendous polar ice. The whole of this was avoided by crossing well to the eastward, where we met much of last year's ice perfectly level, and occasionally a huge flat floe of older date, but still very good walking: this appearance of the strait is most propitious, giving every hope of a passage through."

All still promised well on board the "Investigator"; and the sanitary condition of the crew was reported to be most satisfactory on May 11th, the day of the Captain's return. During his absence, the stock of fresh provisions had wonderfully increased by the aid of the sportsmen. No less than twenty head of deer were hanging up round the ship, yielding a *thousand pounds of meat*; and the abundance of food justified an increased issue of rations, which were forthwith ordered to be one pound and a half per man, of venison, on six days in every fortnight: this, together with six days in the fortnight of preserved meat, left only two salt-meat days in every fourteen. One would have supposed that on such fare, with a dry and comfortable ship to live in, scurvy would be impossible; but, as the sequel will show, its advance became soon most marked, and though the care of the Captain and the skill of the medical men

checked it considerably, still health was evidently failing, and, although it may be accounted for in many ways, one fact is incontestible, that on the 15th of May the sick list had augmented to the unprecedented number of thirteen. May it not be supposed, then, that the moral effect of finding no help at hand told upon these poor fellows? In June we find six men in their beds; and on July 1st Captain M'Clure says, "A more unfavourable report was made by the surgeon to-day, relative to the appearance of the crew at the monthly inspection, than I had hitherto received: evident symptoms of debility, with incipient scurvy, in sixteen of the men."

The long absence of fresh vegetable diet might have predisposed these men to this disease; but, considering the quantity of fresh animal food that had so happily been procured for them throughout the past winter and at that time also, it appears quite as likely that the anxious feelings awakened at finding neither provisions nor a vessel at Melville Island, or indeed even a promise of any, had quite as much, if not more, to do in developing the seeds of this disease, than either the nature of their diet or the slight labour of preparing the ship for sea, by ballasting and watering her.

There was no doubt that all were anxious to escape another winter; they felt themselves alone, and having come to save others, it would, unless they reached Baffin's Bay in 1852, be a question whether they could save themselves. Each man must have felt how questionable it was whether his physical strength would, after going through another winter, be sufficient to carry him to the Hudson Bay settlements or to one of the Danish posts in Greenland—a long distance, in either case, from the Bay of Mercy, Banks Land.

But whatever effect these feelings may have had upon their health, there is no question of the firmness with which all were prepared to face the difficulties they might yet have before them. They felt there was no hope but in themselves; but that captain, those officers, and those men were equal to the emergency.

May and June went by without bringing any lively signs of summer; birds, indeed, such as the duck and gull, came, but left the place again, as if from the want of fresh-water pools. The snow at last melted off the exposed parts of the land; and the ice began to thaw, forming large pools of water all over its surface. July opened very unpromisingly: a heavy northerly wind and snow-

storm swept over Mercy Bay, bringing back a painful recollection of the winter that they had hoped was past; and what was worse, on measuring the floe, it was found to be still increasing in thickness, whereas former experience had led them to expect a diminution of about two feet. The ground became so soft from the snow thawing, and the labour of shooting so great, that the sportsmen could no longer keep up the supply of game; and by the 7th of July all the stock of venison was consumed. It is worthy of remark, nevertheless, that the resources of Mercy Bay had yielded the crew of the "Investigator" three meals of fresh meat a week since October 1851. Hardly had they time to regret the loss of this health-sustaining diet, when the indefatigable Sergeant Woon came on board to report that he had just shot two musk-oxen. They were soon conveyed to the ship, and yielded 647 pounds of good meat. They were the first that had been killed in Mercy Bay, and were hailed as a God-send. The sergeant in slaying them had had a narrow escape from the rage of the larger of the two; with his last bullet he had only wounded it, and on its approaching him, he had had to discharge his iron ramrod as a missile into its body in order to save himself.

In the middle of the month the ice-mate reported the floes outside to be in motion. All heard a rumbling noise, as if the pack were driving along, and the joy was great, until upon further examination it was found that the *débâcle* from a ravine was pouring its strong current over the floe. As July drew to its close, the view over the sea from the highest land near was unsatisfactory indeed: ice, ice on every side! no water, and no water-sky! For awhile, however, the ravages of scurvy were mitigated by a quantity of wild sorrel being found; and all hands that could be spared were daily employed collecting it,—the sick getting the largest share, and the men's messes in turn being next served. Either eaten raw as a salad, or cooked, it was extremely palatable, and this was the first succulent vegetable the crew had partaken of since leaving the Sandwich Isles two years before.

Hopes rose high when, about the 16th August, open water was seen in the straits, and the ice of the bay itself began to be loosened from the shore, though it was held by other ice outside. A day or two later, however, the bay opened at the outer end, and the imprisoned navigators saw with delight that a broad lane of water extended along the southern shore for ten miles to the eastward.

Their hope of reaching it lay in a strong south wind blowing the ice of the bay and the ship out with it to seaward. As to sawing the whole distance between her and the water, it was impossible; before it could be done winter would be on them. There being a chance of such a wind and such release, the top-gallant yards were crossed, sails bent, and the tide pole taken in. Its registry during ten months gave as a result that the tide rose two feet, and that the highest tide was four tides after the full and change of moon. A beacon was erected in lat. 74° 6′ 48″ N., and long. 118° 15′ W. In a cylinder attached to a pole was placed a record, telling what the Investigators had done, and whither they expected to go, "in the hope," says the leader of the expedition, "that it may meet the eye of some future explorer of these sterile regions, and throw some light upon the fate of those who perhaps may never reach beyond these limits." The expectation of escape was, however, but short-lived. After the 20th of August the temperature fell, slowly but continually; and when the bay, or that portion of it that had been open, again froze over, all felt that summer was past, and some unforeseen accident could alone save them from wintering again in Mercy Bay. Their summer,

poor fellows, had been a most cheerless one; the sun, from the cloudy and misty state of the atmosphere not having been, with few exceptions, seen since May.

By August 24th, the *lead of water had closed!* no water was visible in Barrow's Strait; and the Investigators were able to walk in all directions over the bay across the young ice. The land rapidly became covered with snow, the vegetation, such as it was, withered; sorrel could no longer be found, warmer clothing became necessary, and the winter of 1852–53 commenced. "It found us," says M'Clure, "ready to combat its rigours as cheerfully as on previous occasions. We were all thinner than we used to be, for we had been twelve months on two thirds of our allowance; but we were still in good working condition." When the first week of September had past, and the chance of an autumnal gale blowing the ship into the pack was at an end, the leader sat down to weigh the course to be pursued to save his men and his ship.

If all remained in the vessel till next year (1853), in the hope of her carrying them home, and the water should not make, as had happened in 1852, all would starve.

On the other hand, it was premature to think of

deserting the ship in the early part of the following spring; for she was sound and strong, and both the Captain's sense of duty and his pride were enlisted in saving to his country and profession the ship that had been entrusted to his charge, and so gallantly had done her work. He therefore decided upon sending away, next spring, all but thirty of the healthiest men, and with them remaining by the ship and running the risk of a fourth winter. Assembling his gallant officers and men, on the 8th of September, Captain M'Clure announced to them the state of affairs, and informed them that on April next thirty of them should proceed homewards, divided into two parties, one retreating by way of North America, up the Mackenzie River, the other proceeding to Cape Spenser, Beechey Island, where Captain Austin's notice, found at Melville Island, led them to expect provisions and a boat *, with which to reach Greenland and the Danish settlements. The remaining thirty hands, and the officers in charge of stores, were to remain with the Captain, and endeavour to save the

* To the best of the Editor's knowledge, this consisted of a boat that was so heavy that no sledge-party could have launched her; the provisions were two casks of salt meat and a bale of blankets.

ship next year; if not so fortunate, they were to spend another winter, and then abandon her in 1854, retreating upon Lancaster Sound to such help as the Admiralty would assuredly send, when they knew from their shipmates of their necessity.

This arrangement was cheerfully received by this excellent body of men; and those who thought they would be the first to go home, were soon heard speculating, with praiseworthy generosity, upon immediately volunteering to come out again in the first ship to the rescue of their messmates, and with lighthearted jocularity promising to bring out a good stock of tobacco pipes for them,—an article which happened to be very scarce in Banks Land, and which all the ingenuity of the seamen could manufacture no substitute for. With such men, and such a spirit, all the difficulties and hardships before them vanished, and none repined at what Providence had sent them.

Towards the close of September, the spirits in the ship were surveyed, and a deficiency found to exist, which obliged the issue of it to be diminished to half a gill per diem. This was a great loss to the men, and the more so that just then no game could be procured, and they were on a bare two-thirds of the rations; a scale of victual-

ling which, unavoidable as it had been for the past twelve months, was slowly sapping everyone's strength. Hunger began now to be felt; and although to his men M'Clure pointed out that their hardships fell far short of those endured by many an honoured arctic expedition, still, when sitting quietly in his cabin, the fact, already more than once represented to him by the surgeon, pressed itself painfully on his senses, that unless aid came in the shape of game, the winter could not be passed on the allowance of food the resources of his ship admitted of, and that all hands would have to abandon the gallant ship in the spring; "but nothing," says he, writing on the 16th October, "but the most absolute necessity will induce me to take such a step."

In October the deer and hares began to return to their winter feeding-grounds in the valleys round Mercy Bay; but seventeen men now on the sick list, and all the duties of housing in the vessel, throwing up embankments of snow to shield her sides from the bitter winter gales, and otherwise preparing her for that season, left little time and few men to spare for shooting-excursions. The whole game list for the month showed a return

of only two deer and nine hares, a small quantity amongst so many hungry mouths.

But when all the necessary work was done, and the men had nothing else to do but take exercise and keep themselves and the ship clean, the feeling of hunger and weakness somewhat abated, and the medical report in November showed no increase of disease, except that those of a very nervous temperament became easily excited and unreasonable. November yielded but little game, for darkness was fast increasing; but the numbers of deer were astonishing, and the wolves harassed the poor creatures until, as in the past winter, they almost fled to the ship for protection. The health of the men appeared to improve somewhat, the favourable change arising, Captain M'Clure thought, from a more contented state of mind than when, in the autumn, the first disappointment at finding no hope of release oppressed all in a greater or less degree: "hungry," he says, "we all are; but, with a little management, the two-thirds allowance, now that we have nothing to do, keeps us from losing health."

Great indeed was the ingenuity displayed in making as much as possible of the food; and much therefore, it is to be feared, was taken in forms

in which quantity was looked to as the sole recommendation: for instance, the salt meat, instead of being cooked, was just thrown into boiling water to warm it and extract the salt, and then eaten *raw*. On these painful details it is, however, unnecessary to dilate; and a pretty good idea of the scanty fare all were on, may be conceived from the following description of the mode in which the gun-room officers lived.

Their stock was all finished, they were on ship's allowance like the men, and like them adopted the system of each in turn being cook or carver for the mess. The carver's share consisted in getting the *last* portion out of the eight into which the food had to be divided,—a method which insured, we need hardly say, the utmost impartiality on the part of the carver, the other members helping themselves to their shares before him. The rations for the day were given out every morning; and each ate it, at his own discretion or inclination, at either breakfast or dinner. They had, in fact, but one meal per diem; for the breakfast, if it deserved the name, consisted of a cup of the weakest cocoa, and a small portion of the small allowance of bread; the rest of the bread, and half a pound of salt meat, containing a good proportion

of bone, with just enough vegetable to swear by, constituted the other meal. There was a cup of weak tea in the evening; but few were able to save anything to eat with it.

There were two breaks to this series of banian days during the close of the year: the one was on the 26th October, the anniversary of the discovery of the North-west Passage; the other, on Christmas day. An extra issue of food and some wine were given to commemorate two festivals which all felt were the last that little community would spend together; and those alone who have been similarly placed can appreciate the heartfelt kindness towards each other which hallowed these occasions, and made their humble cheer appear tenfold more luxurious than it was. It was wonderful, too, to see what care and economy of the stores brought from home, as well as the skill of the sportsmen, were able even in these circumstances to effect. The old-fashioned English plum pudding was still to be seen on Christmas-day, not a very rich one, may be, but good appetite compensated for what it lacked in that respect; there was "Banks Land venison," "Mercy Bay hare soup," "ptarmigan pasties," and some musk-ox beef which had hung in the rigging for two years and odd

months. The good-will and determination of all to be merry, in spite of adverse circumstances, compensated also for whatever might be wanting. The poets amongst the men composed songs, in which their own hardships were made the subject of many a hearty laugh; painters attempted rude illustrations of past scenes of peril or adventure; the comic actors acted; the sick half forgot their maladies, and the whole company tossed care and anxiety to the winds, and felt thankful for the past and hopeful for the future. Had not both officers and men reason to be proud of their comrades? and was not their chief, the captain of this gallant set of men, justified in saying that nothing was impossible whilst such hearts and hands were ready to carry out his plans for the safety of all and the honour of his country? Full indeed was Captain M'Clure's heart of gratitude, and none knew better than himself where it was due. His own words, written on the close of the year 1852, best express his feelings: —

"The new year is about to commence; not one of my original crew has fallen by disease or accident, and all is more promising than I could have ever hoped for. These and all other mercies are alone due to that all-beneficent Providence, who has so

wonderfully upheld us in our many trials and difficulties; relying, therefore, on Him, I cannot but feel as the wife of Manoah did, and repeat her exclamation: 'If the Lord were pleased to kill us, he would not have shewed us all these mercies.'"

CHAP. XVI.

The "Enterprise."—Ill Success of her Travelling Parties.—Late Season.—Passage through Dolphin and Union Strait.—Winter of 1852-53 passed in Cambridge Bay.—Esquimaux numerous.—Traces of the Missing Expedition found.—Game and Fish abound.—Unfortunate Circumstance of no Searching Party having visited King William's Land.—The Bay of Mercy.—Reaction on Board the "Investigator" after Christmas Festivities.—Excessive Cold.—Want of Fuel and consequent Dampness.—Venison plentiful.—Large Sick List.—March, '53.—The Retreating Parties named, and their Routes appointed.—Captain M'Clure's Reason for sending away the Weakly Men.—Wolves, their Voracity and Cunning.—Anxiety of the Sledge-Parties as to Chances of safe Retreat.—Retrospective Glance at Measures taken in England to rescue the "Investigator."—Mr. Cresswell's Letter to the Secretary of the Admiralty, and fortunate Result.—Captains Kellett and M'Clintock ordered to Melville Island.—They reach it in September 1852.—Accidental Discovery of Captain M'Clure's Despatches on the Parry Rock.—Help at Hand for the "Investigator."—April '53 in Mercy Bay.—The first Death.—Captain M'Clure addresses his Men to remove their Despondency.—The Dark and Bright Side of the Cloud.—The unexpected Arrival of Lieut. Pim from the "Resolute."—The Investigators rescued.—Excitement and Happiness of the Crew.

HAVING thus brought the narrative to the close of 1852, it is now necessary to cast a glance back

to the spring of the same year, when we left the "Investigator's" consort, under Captain Collinson, wintering at the southern end of Prince of Wales Strait. All her spring travelling parties returned unsuccessful from long and arduous journeys, in which some of the men suffered considerably from frost-bites and the other consequences of sledge-work in those high latitudes.

The "Enterprise's" crew were somewhat refreshed during the summer, by procuring a fair supply of game, and a considerable quantity of fish from the lakes on Prince Albert Land; it was not, however, until so late as September, that the "Enterprise" appears to have been able to make any progress *eastward* from her wintering place, — a direction Captain Collinson decided upon attempting, with a view to penetrating the unknown space lying between him and Cape Walker in Barrow's Strait. A channel which he entered proved eventually to be a gulf; and he then endeavoured to pass by way of Dolphin and Union Strait, reaching, on the 26th of the same month, Cambridge Bay in Wollaston Land; and there he passed the winter of 1852–53, of which we are now writing. In those winter quarters Esquimaux visited them; and one tribe mustered 200 persons; in their possession was

found a piece of iron, which many still believe to have come from the missing ships, and they had likewise a piece of a doorway or hatch-frame. Knowing what we now do of the point which Franklin's people reached in King William's Land, and where they perished, the connection of these fragments with the "Erebus" and "Terror" appears to be quite easy; but Captain Collinson, being ignorant of those facts, could have but little idea of how close his ship was to the shore whereon Dr. Rae's informants stated they first saw a portion of Franklin's men; and therefore those fragments told him no more than other traces had done which were previously brought home by Captain Penny from Beechey Island, or than did a portion of a stanchion belonging to a ship's ice-plank, which Rae found at his farthest eastern point in 1851.* The land around the "Enterprise" abounded in game, and the waters in salmon, for 1100 of the latter were cured for sea service. We shall here leave H.M.S. "Enterprise," premising that those on board of her ex-

* The "Enterprise" wintered on this occasion 120 miles from King William's Land, where some forty of Franklin's men were first seen by the Esquimaux, and 200 miles from the Great Fish River, the entrance of which, a boat belonging to the last expedition has since been found to have reached.

perienced a very severe winter, and that in the following spring her sledge-parties pushed on to the north-east, passing Rae's farthest point of 1851 by a few miles. But they, like him, although at one time within forty-five miles of King William's Land, did not visit it; had they done so, there is no doubt they would have fallen on traces of those they sought, and very possibly have found the "Erebus" and "Terror" locked up in some such ice-bound harbour as that in which, as we have seen, the "Investigator" was imprisoned. No fault, however, can attach to either Collinson or Rae that they did not do so; but the sad chapter of unfortunate accidents, by which the relief of Franklin's expedition has been rendered unsuccessful, would be incomplete did history fail to point these facts out; and it serves to show, at any rate, that the unavoidable fallibility of the reasoning and wisdom of men, rather than, as some have argued, the folly of endeavouring to relieve the lost expedition, alone occasioned the efforts of England to prove in the end abortive.

When the festivals of Christmas and New Year's day had passed in the Bay of Mercy, there was not much to make men light-hearted or merry, although they were still determined to look as much as possible on the bright side of things. He

who tempers the wind to the shorn lamb, watched over them in their trial; and it is remarkable, in reading over a daily journal far too minute for the general reader, to see, throughout this season, the remarkable way in which His bounty supported them. On the one hand we see the resources of the ship gradually failing or being reduced to the slenderest supply,—for instance in the important article of fuel;—and as a consequence, the enervated frames of the men had to stand even a more severe trial than before from cold and damp, not only in-board but also without doors, for the temperature of that winter throughout the arctic regions was unusually severe: from 60° to 65° below zero of Fahr. was registered by the "Investigator," as well as other ships elsewhere. Yet this very cold, so intense that the very ship seemed to suffer from it, and bolts, treenails, and fastenings were heard to crack under the influence of frost and contraction, forced the deer to approach the ship and the seashore so closely as to afford venison weekly throughout this trying season, at the rate of a pound and a half of meat twice in the seven days to every man in the ship. January passed, giving a mean temperature of 44°—, or 76° below freezing point; and this, be it remembered, was

endured by men under-fed, scorbutic, and looking forward to making no ordinary efforts to save their lives in a few short weeks' time.

In February, Captain M'Clure says, "the excessive cold has been much felt; the lower deck, particularly from about twenty feet before the main hatchway to the gun-room bulkhead, has been very damp and wet; and we cannot afford more coal to dry it up. The sick list has likewise considerably increased, seldom being below fifteen; four or five of the cases decided scurvy, the others mostly diarrhœa and ague, caused, no doubt, by the moisture between-decks. Our providential supply of fresh meat still continues; four deer fell in the first week, although the sportsmen, on account of the weather, were only able to venture out during two days, and that only for a few hours. Surely this is our 'manna!' I am sure it is considered as such by all on board: the deer appear completely spell-bound to this particular locality; for a single mile south or north of our position not one is to be seen, but abreast the ship they are met as we land, and, bad shots as we are, the supply of venison has been regularly 200 lbs. per week!"

So much did the dampness of the lower deck increase, that hanging stoves had to be got up



DISTANT LAND OF MELVILLE ISLAND FROM BARING LAND

between the 7th and 14th of February; and every precaution was taken to check the increase of disease, which had already placed in the doctor's hands one third of the crew of sixty men. These steps were attended apparently with considerable success; for on March the 1st the medical report, all things considered, was more favourable than Captain M'Clure had expected.

On March 3rd, the travelling parties for England, viâ America and Barrow's Strait, were told off: they consisted of thirty of the most weakly hands divided into two parties of fifteen men each.

Lieut. Haswell was to take the one, viâ Griffith's Island, to Cape Spencer, there embark in the boat which Captain Austin said he had left, and in her attempt to reach Greenland. The other party, under Lieut. Gurney Cresswell, was to retreat upon the depôt formed at Princess Royal Island in 1851, recruit themselves, and taking the boat to be there found, push for the Coppermine River, ascend it to the Hudson Bay Territories, and thence home. Captain M'Clure's reason for thus despatching all his sickly and weakly hands was, that he felt convinced that these men could not survive another winter after what they had gone through in the past one; and thus he gave them

the only chance of saving their lives which it was in his power to afford.

The next thing done was to put these travellers upon full allowance of food, so as to enable them to pick up strength as much as possible. On March 28th the weather had sensibly improved, and the change had beneficially affected all the sickly men; indeed, all but two of them were able on that day to take a little exercise. On the 24th the novel event of the first wolf being killed occurred. The brute had gorged himself upon a deer which had been shot, and fell a victim consequently to his gourmandism. Strangely enough, too, considering the length of time the Investigators had been trying without success to shoot these robbers, another wolf was killed by Mr. Court (master) soon after in self-defence. That officer, it seems, was out shooting, when two wolves marked him down, and gradually closed upon him; one keeping in front, and the other behind. After trying all sorts of methods of frightening them off, such as shouting, waving his arms, and running towards them, he found that one of the wolves had closed in on him to within twenty yards. Taking a careful aim, he fired and struck it in the throat, but that did not turn it; and having only a single-

barrelled gun, it was as much as he could do, to load again, and kill the savage beast when it had crawled up to within three yards of his person. As the travellers were to leave the ship upon the 15th of April, the close of March saw all the many preparations for a sledge journey well in hand. The officers, though cognisant of the risk and dangers which beset their lines of retreat, wisely hid them from the knowledge of the men. The healthy amongst the sledge crews were consequently sanguine in their hopes of success; but many a poor fellow, whose black and swollen limbs hardly served to carry him about the ship, knew in his heart that, although the journey he was about to take would be his only chance for life, yet it was but a very slender one. Despondency there was not, but there was a deep feeling throughout the ship of their sad and forlorn position, met, however, by a childlike confidence on the part of the crew in the wisdom of their leaders' arrangements, and a perfect faith in the good Providence which had sustained them so far.

Threatening, however, as the future looked for the safety of these gallant men, a series of fortuitous circumstances—providential ones would be the

more correct term — was now bringing about their rescue.

It will be remembered that, when Captains Austin, Penny, and Sir John Ross returned to England, considerable difference of opinion existed as to the necessity for a farther search for Sir John Franklin; but his widow, who, through all her sad trials and sore disappointments, never wavered in her faith of his having accomplished the service he was sent to execute, or hesitated at any sacrifice to effect the rescue of her husband and his companions, maintained this necessity so strongly, and was backed by so many influential arctic authorities, that the Admiralty, unable to decide the question, ordered an Arctic Committee to sit upon the question of the resumption of the search for Franklin. That committee recommended that it should be again resumed, and, satisfied that Franklin was not at Melville Island, proposed that all the strength of such an expedition as might be sent should be employed up Wellington Channel, and, never dreaming of the "Enterprise" or "Investigator" having made such progress as they had done, merely advised as follows, touching support or aid to them:—

"With respect to the efforts now making to

afford relief to the missing ships in the direction of Behring's Strait, we do not venture to offer any suggestions, beyond a hope that, until further accounts are received from Captain Collinson and Commander M'Clure, the 'Plover' may be kept fully provisioned" (in Behring's Strait).

Now, according to the nature of the evidence before them — furnished mostly by the seniors in late expeditions, who took a very gloomy and unpromising view of the case — and considering also the amount of probability that any such navigation would be carried out as Captain M'Clure appeared to contemplate, in his admirable official letter from Behring's Strait, there can be no doubt that this committee gave a correct opinion; but it was fortunate for England's naval history, and for humanity, that a parent's solicitude for a son, absent in this expedition, was more clear-sighted, and that by that, as well as by the zeal and energy of Lady Franklin, a modification of that opinion was effected.

Mr. Cresswell indeed, in a letter which his kindness allows me to make public, pointed out, with almost prophetic vision, the very position in which the "Investigator's" crew was placed, and also suggested the means by which their wants

might be supplied, and their safety insured. The letter ran as follows:—

"Lynn, Norfolk, 23rd March, 1852.

"SIR,

"In reference to the expedition now fitting out for the Arctic Regions under Sir Edward Belcher, I am induced earnestly to request the attention of the Lords Commissioners of the Admiralty to the following appeal:—

"In the sailing orders given to the expedition to Behring's Strait, the sixteenth paragraph leaves to Captain Collinson the course to be pursued after leaving Point Barrow, referring him for assistance and direction to Captain Kellett, Sir W. E. Parry, and Captain Beechey.

"In the memoranda given by Sir Edward Parry and Captain Beechey, we find that they both consider the great object of the Behring's Strait expedition to be to penetrate to Banks Land, or even to Melville Island.

"The writers of nearly all the letters relating to the position of Sir John Franklin consider the most likely quarter in which to find him to be the vicinity of Banks Land or Melville Island.

"Colonel Sabine, in a letter to Sir W. E. Parry,

15th June, 1850, speaking of Sir John Franklin, says, 'His advance from Melville Island in the season of 1847 may have been limited to a distance of 50 or perhaps 100 miles at farthest,' and that 'in 1848 he may have endeavoured to retrace his steps, but only with partial success. It is, I apprehend, quite a conceivable case, that under these circumstances, the crews, incapable of extricating the ships from the ice, may have at length been obliged to quit them and attempt a retreat, not towards the continent, because too distant, but to Melville Island, where certainly food (seals), and probably fuel might be obtained, and *where they would naturally suppose that vessels despatched from England for their relief would in the first instance seek them.*'

"Captain Austin's expedition was directed, in accordance with the above authorities, to make its principal efforts in the vicinity of Melville Island.

"The intelligence of the fitting out of Captain Austin's expedition reached the Behring's Strait expedition, at the Sandwich Islands, and would unquestionably stimulate them in endeavouring at almost any risk to communicate with Captain Austin at Melville Island.

"It is desirable to realise as much as possible what would be the effect on the officers of the Behring's Strait expedition on being possessed of the intelligence alluded to.

"There can be no reasonable doubt but that they would anticipate Captain Austin's expedition, aided as it was by steamers reaching Melville Island, as Sir W. E. Parry had done so without steamers in 1819; and that Captain Austin would, as a matter of course, leave a supply of provisions and fuel, and possibly a boat, for any party that might reach that point from Behring's Strait.

"*Trusting to this, a party might be pushed forward at imminent risk; but how terrible would be their despair on finding a barren notice of Lieutenant M'Clintock's visit in* 1851, *instead of the supply anticipated!*

"There is nothing unreasonable in the above supposition, as Captain Kellett in his evidence, page 170., says, '*Should Commander M'Clure be successful in getting far to the eastward, I am convinced, from a conversation I had with him, and indeed his own letter will show, that he will use every endeavour to reach Melville Island with his parties, if he fail with his ship.*'

"Again, Captain Kellett, in a letter to Captain

Collinson, 20th of May, 1850, says: 'If you can pass point Barrow and escape the shoal water, we shall see you come home by the Atlantic.'

"Now the 'Investigator' passed Point Barrow the 5th of August, 1850, and nothing has been heard of her from that time; we may therefore conclude that she struggled to get to Melville Island through the seasons of 1850 and 1851. Certainly she did not return in 1851 through Behring's Strait, or it must have been already known.

"If she is far to the eastward, in all probability Melville Island will be their only resource. Captain Collinson, in the 'Enterprise,' passed Point Barrow in 1851, and will in all probability push to the eastward this summer, and may reach Melville Island.

"Under these circumstances, ought not the powerful arctic squadron now fitting out to have some reference to *the support of Captain Collinson's expedition*, as well as to following out Penny's discoveries, and to the faint hope of finding Sir John Franklin.

"I venture to suggest that one of the three steamers should proceed to Melville Island, if the navigation be open, as in 1819, leave provisions,

fuel, and a boat at Winter Harbour: she could then return to the ships at Beechey Island.

"If the navigation should not be found open, then the steamer should make as far to the westward as possible, and send provisions to Byam Martin Island, or any favourable position that might be practicable, sending forward a party to Melville Island, to leave a record of their proceedings, to direct where to find provisions, and also to communicate the object of Sir Edward Belcher's expedition.

"If the Admiralty thought proper, in case of the steamer reaching Melville Island, she might winter there, and in the spring send searching parties to the westward. They might be so arranged as to command a wide field of research, and possibly cross Captain Collinson or Commander M'Clure, as they would start from a point more than 200 miles west of Baillie Hamilton Island.

"I must apologise with trespassing upon you with such a long letter, but the importance of the object will, I trust, plead my excuse.

"&c. &c.

"To Augustus Stafford, Esq. M.P.
"Secretary, Admiralty."

His Grace the Duke of Northumberland was then the senior Lord of the Board of Admiralty. He was struck with the soundness of Mr. Cresswell's views; and having sought the opinion of some arctic authorities upon the subject, a paragraph was inserted in the orders under which Captain Belcher sailed *; and his expedition, in consequence, became divided, for the twofold objects, of seeking Franklin, and affording aid to Captains M'Clure and Collinson: two vessels going up Wellington Channel, under Captains Belcher and Osborn; whilst the "Resolute" and "Intrepid," parting from them at Beechey Island,

* Paragraphs 5. and 6. of Captain Sir E. Belcher's instructions were as follows:—

5. "Arrived at this point (*Beechey Island*), two great objects will engage your attention:

"First, the endeavouring to pass up Wellington Channel with one sailing vessel and one steamer; secondly, the advance of a similar force towards Melville Island.

6. "The object of the first of these expeditions will be, the endeavour to recover those traces of Sir John Franklin which ceased at Cape Bowden to the north of Beechey Island, and to follow up such traces, if they should be found. The object of the other expedition will be, to deposit, if possible, at Winter Harbour, Melville Island, or failing that, at Byam Martin Island, a supply of provisions, fuel, and clothing, for any parties that might reach such positions from Captain Collinson's or Commander M'Clure's ships."

were, under the command of Captains Kellett and M'Clintock, to proceed to Melville Island; a duty which, so far as the last-named division was concerned, was, as will be seen, faithfully executed.

In accordance, therefore, with the recommendation of the arctic committee, and the instructions of the Lords Commissioners of the Admiralty, the expedition under Captains Sir E. Belcher and Kellett, C. B., consisting of H. M. ships "Resolute," "Assistance," "Pioneer," and "Intrepid," left England in the spring of 1852; and without entering into a detail of the circumstances which brought about the eventual desertion of that fine squadron — a tale which the editor intends at a future day to relate in a sequel to his "Stray Leaves from an Arctic Journal" — it will suffice for our present purpose to say that on the 15th of August, 1852, the "Resolute," Captain Kellett, and the "Intrepid," Commander M'Clintock, having on the previous day parted company from the "Assistance" and the "Pioneer," proceeded towards Melville Island, from the depôt ship "North Star," Commander Pullen, stationed at Beechey Island.

Melville Island was reached on the 1st September, and on the 5th inst. the vessels of the

western division made fast to the ice which yet filled up Winter Harbour, the well known wintering place of Sir Edward Parry in the year 1819. A depôt of provisions was immediately formed; and as no cairn or pole had been erected by Captain M'Clure's party or that of Lieut. Parks from the "Enterprise," when they visited the place in the spring of the same year, the ships under Captain Kellett actually retired again to a secure wintering place under Dealy Island, some distance to the eastward, without being aware that Melville Island had been visited by those they were in search of, or that within 180 miles of them the "Investigator" was then lying in want of assistance! Such are the difficulties and chances which prevent one party finding another in those regions. Directly, however, that Captain Kellett was securely frozen in, he despatched autumnal parties of travellers to lay out provisions for the use of parties he purposed sending forth in the ensuing spring. One of these parties, under Lieut. Mecham, left the ship on the 23rd September, reached Winter Harbour, struck over-land for Liddon Gulf, deposited provisions on its shore, and returned to Winter Harbour; when, happening to inspect more closely than usual the famous mass of sandstone on which Parry had

caused his ship's name to be engraved, Lieut. Mecham could hardly credit his senses when he dis-



Icebergs in Baffin's Sandstone mass at the entrance of Winter Harbour, 18 feet high, 22 feet long, 7 or 8 feet broad.

covered a document upon its summit, detailing the accomplishment of the north-west passage, and the position of H. M. S. "Investigator" in Banks Land! Great joy was there in Captain Kellett's squadron at having discovered one at least of the ships they sought; and many an anxious discussion took place at Melville Island whether they could next spring send off parties sufficiently early to reach the Bay of Mercy before Captain M'Clure was obliged to abandon his ship; and, on the other hand, there were doubts whether he might not have been able to push on during the past summer, and per-

haps have again to be sought in some new direction.

Lieut. Bedford Pim, of the "Assistance," was, with Dr. Domville, of the same ship, told off to start with sledges from Melville Island to Banks Land: and on March 10th, 1853, they left their shipmates, amidst the prayers and cheers of all.

Meantime, April 1853 had come in on the "Investigator"; the sledges were ready, the slender store of provisions was packed, those that were going strove to be sanguine, those that were to remain behind had written to cheer up mothers, wives, and sisters, who must have already begun to mourn their long absence. On the 5th of the month the first death since leaving England occurred on board the "Investigator": it was occasioned by the thoughtlessness of the poor fellow himself, who, by way of a joke, went into the surgery and drank off the washings of several medicine bottles. But the moral effect of a death at such a time was distressing, and to re-inspirit the men their iron-nerved captain took an early opportunity of calling the crew together, and making an address to them in not ineloquent terms. In it he called their attention to the difficulties already mastered, to the honours won, to the grateful re-

compense their good service was certain to obtain for each, and to the merciful Providence which had so upheld them hitherto; and he begged them always to remember that, in the gloomiest hour of trial, relief might, and often did come, and that the darkest cloud had ever a silvery side to it. Cheerfully again did all assent to his opinions, and the poor fellows talked and looked happier for what had been said to them.

The 6th of April, 1853, came in. A fine deer was hung up ready to be cut up for a hearty meal, that all hands were to partake of before their separation, which was to take place in the following week; when an event occurred which rescued them from further suffering and trials of fortitude. I give Captain M'Clure's journal almost verbatim, upon this day.

"While walking near the ship, in conversation with the first lieutenant upon the subject of digging a grave for the man who died yesterday, and discussing how we could cut a grave in the ground whilst it was so hardly frozen—a subject naturally sad and depressing,—we perceived a figure walking rapidly towards us from the rough ice at the entrance of the bay. From his pace and gestures we both naturally supposed at first that

he was some one of our party pursued by a bear, but as we approached him doubts arose as to who it could be. He was certainly unlike any of our men; but recollecting that it was possible some one might be trying a new travelling dress, preparatory to the departure of our sledges, and certain that no one else was near, we continued to advance. When within about two hundred yards of us, this strange figure threw up his arms, and made gesticulations resembling those used by Esquimaux, besides shouting, at the top of his voice, words which, from the wind and intense excitement of the moment, sounded like a wild screech; and this brought us both fairly to a stand-still. The stranger came quietly on, and we saw that his face was as black as ebony, and really at the moment we might be pardoned for wondering whether he was a denizen of this or the other world, and had he but given us a glimpse of a tail or a cloven hoof, we should assuredly have taken to our legs: as it was, we gallantly stood our ground, and, had the skies fallen upon us, we could hardly have been more astonished than when the dark-faced stranger called out,—

"I'm Lieutenant Pim, late of the 'Herald,' and

now in the 'Resolute.' Captain Kellett is in her at Dealy Island!"

"To rush at and seize him by the hand was the first impulse, for the heart was too full for the tongue to speak. The announcement of relief being close at hand, when none was supposed to be even within the Arctic Circle, was too sudden, unexpected, and joyous for our minds to comprehend it at once. The news flew with lightning rapidity, the ship was all in commotion; the sick, forgetful of their maladies, leapt from their hammocks; the artificers dropped their tools, and the lower deck was cleared of men; for they all rushed for the hatchway to be assured that a stranger was actually amongst them, and that his tale was true. Despondency fled the ship, and Lieut. Pim received a welcome—pure, hearty, and grateful—that he will assuredly remember and cherish to the end of his days."

In a very short time the dog-sledge with two men arrived, and long and eager were the conversations and questionings which ensued. The Investigators felt perfectly bewildered with the rescue which had reached them just in time to save, in all probability, the lives of the thirty persons who were about to attempt to reach

home with sledges and boats (as well as of that forlorn hope who were to remain behind); and when the fact had perfectly realised itself to all, it may be imagined what their feelings were. It would be supererogation on our part to attempt to describe the fulness and gratitude of heart with which that night each must have thanked his God for all his mercies.

* * * * *

CHAP. XVII.

Captain M'Clure proceeds to Melville Island to see Captain Kellett.—M'Clure's Views.—His Letter.—Captain Kellett only gives Leave for healthy Volunteers to remain in "Investigator."—Medical Survey unsatisfactory.—Abandonment of H.M.S. "Investigator."—Depôt of Provisions formed at Mercy Bay.—Arrival on Board H.M.S. "Resolute" and "Intrepid."—Searching-Parties under Captain M'Clintock, Lieutenants Mecham and Hamilton, unsuccessful.—Captain Kellett decides upon falling back upon Beechey Island.—Unfavourable Season.—Squadron blown out of Winter Quarters.—Arrested at Byam Martin Channel.—Large Supply of fresh Meat procured.—"Resolute" and "Intrepid" caught in the Pack.—Winter in the Pack.—The "Phœnix" arrives at Beechey Island, and takes home Lieut. Creswell.—1853.—The Investigators pass a fourth Winter with impunity, and then leave the "Resolute" for Beechey Island.—Captain Sir E. Belcher's Plans to abandon the Squadron.—Orders the "Resolute" and "Intrepid" to be abandoned.—News of Collinson, in 1852, having pushed on into the Ice.—"Assistance" and "Pioneer" ordered to be deserted.—"Phœnix" and "Talbot" arrive with Provisions and fresh Crews.—All return Home.—Investigators rewarded in 1855.

Captain M'Clure decided now at once upon going to see Captain Kellett, and making arrangements with him for having all his sickly hands sent to Dealy Island, and thence home, whilst he,

still adhering to his original plan, endeavoured to carry home the "Investigator" by waiting in her through another Arctic summer and winter, that of 1853–1854, before abandoning her, and retreating to Melville Island; with this plan in view, he penned the following letter, and remarkable as the whole tone of it is, I should do injustice to the cool, unflinching nerve of the writer, did I not place in italics that paragraph in which, with generous heroism, he points out the inutility of risking more lives should he and his ship again be missing.

To the Secretary of the Admiralty.

"Her Majesty's Discovery ship 'Investigator,'
"Bay of Mercy, Baring's Island
(now Banks Land),
"April 10th, 1853.

"Sir,

"In the event of our not getting to England this year, I think it necessary to acquaint you, for the information of the Lords Commissioners of the Admiralty, what our operations will be in 1854, that their Lordships may be enabled to take such co-operative measures for our relief as may appear expedient.

"Should the ice break up in this bay sufficiently early to permit our getting through the straits this

season, and finding the water open to the eastward of Leopold Island, it would be my object to push forward, without stopping to take on board any provisions from Port Leopold; but, if contrarywise, the ice should be thick towards Lancaster Sound, I would, if possible, proceed to Port Leopold, and complete a twelvemonth's provisions, and then risk wintering in the pack, or getting through, in preference to remaining at the above port; if, however, we are detained in this bay till next year, it will then be requisite to leave towards the end of April and make for Port Leopold, where I am aware that there is a good boat, a house, and ample supplies; and, when the navigable season opens, proceed to Pond's Bay, coasting along the shore of Barrow's Straits; arriving at Pond's Bay, and if finding from the Esquimaux that no whalers have as yet been there, I should there await their appearance as long as my provisions would admit, and then go down the west shore of Baffin's Bay, keeping close along the land floe, where whalers or their boats are almost certain of being met with; failing this, I should cross to Disco, with the hope of getting a passage in one of the Danish vessels which come there annually, and leave about the beginning of September; or being too late for them, either charter or purchase

one of their coasting schooners, which I believe trade amongst the settlements, if she was capable of standing an Atlantic voyage; could neither of these be accomplished, we must of necessity remain until the following season at that settlement.

"Should any of Her Majesty's ships be sent for our relief, and we have quitted Port Leopold, a notice containing information of our route will be left at the door of the house on Whaler's Point, or on some conspicuous position; *if, however, on the contrary, no intimation should be found of our having been there, it may at once be surmised that some fatal catastrophe has happened, either from our being carried into the Polar Sea or smashed in Barrow's Straits, and no survivors left. If such be the case, which however I will not anticipate, it will then be quite unnecessary to penetrate farther to the westward for our relief, as by the period that any vessel could reach that port we must, from want of provisions, all have perished; in such a case, I would submit that the officer may be directed to return, and by no means incur the danger of losing other lives in quest of those who will then be no more.*

"As, however it may occur (as was the case with Sir John Ross) that the ice may not break up in Regent's Inlet during the whole

summer, it is as well to provide against such a contingency; if such should happen, it would be necessary to winter at Port Leopold, unless apprised of the locality of any ship that might be sent for our relief, which I think might be accomplished without any great difficulty, as, although such vessel may not be enabled to get far up the straits, yet as Admiralty Inlet would be pretty certain of being clear of ice, she might proceed thither, and in some secure bay freeze in, and when the straits were firmly frozen, about the middle of October, a small travelling party could be despatched with the intelligence; the whole would then proceed to her, and although rather late in the season, men working for their lives are not likely to be discouraged by a little cold.

"Whatever may be the final termination of this long, tedious, but I hope not unimportant voyage, I beg, Sir, that you will assure their Lordships that in every stage I have been guided entirely by what I have considered to be my duty in prosecuting to the utmost the object for which the expedition was fitted out; and although we have not succeeded in obtaining any information which could afford the slightest clue to the fate of our missing countrymen, I hope that the services

performed in the tracing of a very great extent of coast line, the discovery of much new land (a portion of which is inhabited by a simple and primitive people not hitherto known), and, above all, the accurate knowledge of that 'Passage between the Atlantic and Pacific Oceans,' which for so many hundred years has baffled maritime Europe, its very existence being almost considered doubtful, will, I trust, be considered events sufficiently interesting and important to elicit from their Lordships a favourable consideration of our services.

"I have the honour to be,

"Sir,

"Your obedient and humble Servant,

(Signed) "ROBERT M'CLURE,

"Commander."

According to his determination, Captain M'Clure left the "Investigator" with a sledge-party, and reached the "Resolute's" and "Intrepid's" winter-quarters on the 19th April. 'We can appreciate the meeting between himself and Captain Kellett, for they had parted on that eventful day in Behring's Strait in 1850, when the latter gave Captain M'Clure an opportunity of waiting for his con-

sort, which, had he accepted, the North-west Passage would not have been achieved, and the search for Franklin would not have been completed upon even one line from ocean to ocean. Captain Kellett at first concurred in M'Clure's views of endeavouring to save the "Investigator"; but when Lieut. Cresswell of that ship arrived on May 2nd with some of the most weakly hands, and reported that two more deaths had already occurred in the Bay of Mercy, Capt. Kellett, as senior officer, felt that his responsibility would be great if he allowed the zeal of Captain M'Clure or his followers, in fulfilling the requirements of professional honour, to jeopardise the lives of those who had so gallantly done their duty.* It

* The state of the men brought over by Lieut. Cresswell is best described in the following evidence given by Dr. Domville before the Select Committee of the House of Commons, which assembled, in July, 1855, to decide upon the reward due to Captain M'Clure and his men.

Captain M'Clure arrived on the 19th of April at Her Majesty's ship "Resolute," and he remained on board until the 2nd of May, when another party from his ship arrived. "Until this period Commander M'Clure had been detained by Captain Kellett, the defective condition of his sledge's crew (who had doubtless been selected as the most efficient) being such as to cause some apprehension for the capabilities of the remainder to make a further sojourn in these regions; and most forcibly did the appearance of the above detachment justify the measure. Some vague information of their enfeebled condition

was then arranged that Dr. Domville, of the "Resolute," should return with Capt. M'Clure to the "Investigator," hold a medical survey on every person on board of her, order those home who might not be considered fit to withstand another winter, and then give the healthy the option of remaining in her for a fourth season, or not, as they might choose. On reaching the "Investigator," Capt. M'Clure addressed his men relative to their volunteering to remain out, and then gave twenty-four hours for the medical survey to take place, and for the sound men to make up their minds whether they would stay with him or go home. The survey, however, was fatal to the hopes of the resolute leader; for on

had preceded them; the stern reality now presented itself: one officer, subject to periods of mental aberration; one man in a state of *dementia*" (or imbecility), "his condition and appearance rendered still more pitiable from severe frostbite of the fingers; two men carried on the sledges, the one with scurvy, the other with urinary disease and phlegmonous inflammation of the leg; the remainder all more or less affected with scorbutic disease and debility, as indicated to the spectator in the tottering gait, attenuated form, and care-worn expression of countenance, occasionally lighted up as the truth and recollection of their altered condition flitted across the imagination; a change (as some expressed themselves) difficult to realise. For several months past their thoughts had been pregnant with the uncertainty of the future, to which no definite results could be assigned."

the following day, May 23rd, he writes in his diary, "My surprise and mortification at finding only four men who felt able to go through another winter were great, but I must do all my officers the credit to say that they came most nobly and spiritedly forward, tendering their services, and expressing anxiety to remain and abide the chances of another season." Admiring as one may the iron will of M'Clure, yet, perhaps, on the whole it was best that circumstances did not allow him to remain; for the medical report was most serious, and as circumstances proved that the season of 1853 was not a remarkably favourable one at Melville Island, and the "Investigator" could not have escaped, we may rejoice that these gallant men were put to no farther trials in Mercy Bay.

The report of the medical men was to the following effect.

"REPORT OF SURVEY OF CREW OF 'INVESTIGATOR.'

"Her Majesty's Ship 'Investigator,'
"Bay of Mercy, 23rd May, 1853.

"SIR,

"In obedience to your orders conveyed to us through Commander M'Clure directing a survey to

be held on the officers and men remaining on board this ship, with a view of ascertaining their general state of health and efficiency for further service in the Polar Sea, we have the honour to inform you that we have this day held a strict and careful survey accordingly, and beg to state, as the result thereof, that their present state of health is such as renders them utterly unfit to undergo the rigour of another winter in this climate, without entertaining the most serious apprehension for the consequence.

"There exists in all of them at present, with one or two exceptions, well marked evidence of scurvy and debility in various stages of development, with great loss of flesh and strength, as may be seen from the remarks appended to the name of each in the accompanying list, which calls for their departure from these regions as early as possible as a matter of urgent necessity, and the adoption of prompt means to insure the same, that they may be placed under the salutary influence of such anti-scorbutic and other agents as are essential for their recovery and ultimate safety.

"We are also of opinion that the reduced allowance of provisions on which they have

been victualled for a period of nearly twenty months is one which we consider, and the past experience of others has likewise proved, to be quite inadequate for maintaining the health of the men exposed to the rigorous influence of this climate.

"That it has rendered them less able to generate an amount of animal heat sufficient to resist the intensity of the cold, while it has established a predisposition to the attacks of that disease (scurvy) the germs of which now so universally prevail amongst them, with its usual distressing influence on the mind, likewise rendering them highly susceptible of other diseases, and unable to withstand the privations to which they have been exposed, and which are inseparable from Arctic service, is sufficiently obvious, as their present condition but too fully proves.

"It is likewise our opinion that, from their present state and condition, the remedial resources of the ship would be insufficient to establish such a state of health and efficiency as to afford any guarantee against the occurrence of those evils which could not fail to result from the circumstance of remaining in the ship, and exposed to the intense severity of another (the fourth) Arctic winter, after the

effects of a sojourn so long as that which has fallen to their lot to have experienced.

"We have, &c.

(Signed) "ALEXANDER ARMSTRONG,
"Surgeon, H.M.S. 'Investigator.'

(Signed) "W. T. DOMVILLE,
"Surgeon, H.M.S. 'Resolute.'

"Henry Kellett, Captain, C.B.,
H.M.S. 'Resolute.'"

Some days afterwards, even Captain M'Clure seems to have resigned himself to his disappointment, and, bitter as it was to be obliged to quit his ship, to look upon it as a duty. In every stage of his perilous voyage, he had found that all things were ordered for the best; and he dreaded lest the execution of what he and his officers considered their duty as naval men, namely, that of saving their ship, should be construed into a charge of wantonly perilling his crew. It only remained, therefore, for him to land his boats, stores, and provisions, so as to form a depôt for Captain Collinson, or anyone else who, in after years, should need such supplies, and then to secure his ship to prevent her being blown to sea by future gales of wind. As an instance of how carefully the provisions and

stores had been husbanded during an absence of *three years* from any store or dockyard, the depôt deserves a place in this narrative; it consisted of the following articles:—

Biscuit - - - -	1000 lbs.
Rum - - - -	26 galls.
Brandy - - - -	20 „
Salt beef - - -	600 lbs.
Pork - - - -	1600 „
Preserved meat - - -	3000 „
Flour - - -	6420 „
Suet - - - -	112 „
Sugar - - - -	1000 „
Chocolate - - -	435 „
Tea - - - -	126 „
Tobacco - - -	484 „
Clothing for thirty men for a year, boat, spars, rope, powder, shot, and arms.	

Their last duty, and that a painful one, was to erect a neat tablet over the graves of their three shipmates who had died in the Bay of Mercy, and that done, on the 3rd June, 1853, the "Investigator's" crew hoisted the colours to the mast-head of their dear gallant bark, and turned their backs upon her as sorrowfully as they would have done on an old well-tried friend in his extremity.

On June 17th, the squadron at Dealy Island was reached by the Investigators, who found that every preparation for their comfort had been made

on board the "Resolute" and "Intrepid." Each ship housed a portion of the "Investigator's" crew and officers; and after a hearty meal and a long exchange of news from home and startling anecdotes from Banks Land, the Investigators settled into their new ships, and thought all their troubles at an end.

Little occurred to break the monotony of arctic life at Bridport Inlet, Dealy Island, until Mr. Roche, mate of the "Resolute," who had been sent down early in the season to the "North Star" with some men, to relieve the increased demand upon the "Resolute's" provisions and stores, returned quite unexpectedly with a dog-sledge, having been to Beechey Island and back, a distance of 600 miles, within the short space of six weeks.

The news and letters he brought, together with the return of one travelling party after another of Captain Kellett's sledge-expeditions, served to while away the anxious time before the water made in Barrow's Strait.

Captain M'Clintock, Lieutenants Mecham and Hamilton, made extensive journeys, searching most completely every foot of land that lay to the north or north-west of Melville Island, whilst

Captain Richards, by a remarkable journey from Northumberland Sound in Wellington Channel to Dealy Island, put Captain Kellett in perfect possession of the position of the unlucky division under Captain Sir Edward Belcher.

Meantime Lieut. Cresswell was sent from the "Resolute" to Beechey Island, and such despatches given to him as would inform the Admiralty of the safety of the "Investigator," should the "Intrepid" or "Resolute" fail to escape from their advanced position in the forthcoming autumn.

When Captain Kellett had before him the results of the search made by his sledge-parties, and saw that nothing farther could be done in a *north-west* direction, he altered his mind about sending the "Intrepid" alone with the "Investigator's" crew to Beechey Island, and decided to start with both vessels for that rendezvous as soon as the state of the ice would admit of his doing so.

August came in; the ice was in motion outside, but things did not look promising: the season was a backward one at Melville Island, though very forward in Wellington Channel. On the 18th of August a strong gale commenced off the land; the ice acted upon by it broke up in all directions, a

lane of water made astern, and that night the "Resolute" and "Intrepid" were at sea, and the Investigators, poor fellows, as they hoped, homeward bound!

Within twenty-four hours the ships were brought up by the pack of Byam Martin Channel; and for many a day they lay under the extreme point of Melville Island, watching for an opening to dash across to Bathurst Land, for, once under its lee, they knew the northerly gales would inevitably make "*land water*," and enable them to accomplish another run for Beechey Island: thence to England was a certainty.

Day after day passed; the drifting pack in Byam Martin Channel continued in a most unpromising state, whilst winter was fast advancing with snow, darkness, and newly-formed ice. Happily, this part of Melville Island, like every other part of the southern shore of that favoured land, was found to be abounding in game, especially musk-oxen. Such a God-send, under the circumstances, was eagerly seized by Captain Kellett, who naturally felt most anxious to save, and carry in health and strength to England, the crew of the "Investigator." Every available gun and man was sent to secure fresh meat; and such was

their success that about 10,000 lbs. weight of game was eventually secured,—and being soon frozen it was easily preserved for the coming winter. At one time the meat was festooned round the rigging of the "Resolute" and "Intrepid," until they resembled butchers' stalls far more than British discovery ships. At last, driven to risk anything rather than remain where they were for another winter, the vessels attempted to force a way through the pack; but on the 9th of September both the "Intrepid" and "Resolute" became permanently imbedded in the newly-formed ice, and a north-west gale forcing down the pack upon them, they became fairly beset and obliged to go whither it and Providence listed.

It was only another disappointment to the gallant crew of the "Investigator." They met it with resignation, and a feeling of thankfulness that they were at any rate some 300 miles nearer home, and that in the well-found ships they were now on board of, every kindness and exertion would be made to carry them safely through their fourth winter. Indeed, no pains were spared by the officers and crew of the "Resolute" and "Intrepid" to grant every comfort to their passengers, and to distract their thoughts from those cor-

roding anxieties which, perhaps, more than all else predispose to scurvy.

For two months, however, the perils encountered by the drifting ships were very great. Their safety at last appeared to be occasioned by constant pressure against the unyielding ships having formed a body of heavy ice round them, the strength of which set at defiance the rest of the surrounding pack. At one time, with northerly winds, they feared being set down to the southward; and if there had been a good outlet for the ice between Lieut. Osborn's and Lieut. Wynniatt's farthest points in 1851, it was within the bounds of probability that next season, 1854, would find the "Resolute" and "Intrepid" in some awkward position between Prince of Wales and Prince Albert Land. This fear was put an end to by finding that the pack only drifted for a short time to the southward, as if to fill up tightly the great space called Melville Sound, and then it and the beset ships drifted steadily away to the eastward—recovering in some measure the southing that had been made—until the pack, doubtless checked by the islands which lay across its path towards Barrow's Strait—such as those of Griffiths, Lowther, Garrett, and others—became

stationary; and right pleased was Captain Kellett to find that after the 12th of November his good ship was at rest, she having then reached a point about due east of Winter Harbour, Melville Island, and in long. 101° W.,— an admirable position for an early escape in the ensuing season. My duty, however, being to relate the adventures of the crew of the "Investigator," it will merely be necessary to say that another winter passed over their heads without any great amount of disease. One officer, a Mr. Sainsbury (mate), died on November 14th; but he had been a very long time ill, and life was evidently prolonged in his case so long as he continued to hope to escape another winter.

Only two or three of the Investigators escaped this their last ordeal. Amongst them was Lieut. Gurney Cresswell, who had been sent down to Beechey Island with a sledge-party, in the spring, from Dealy Island; and the "Phœnix," Captain Inglefield, having made a flying visit to that spot, Lieut. Cresswell was taken to England in that ship, and on October 7th, 1853, communicated to the Admiralty the proud intelligence of the achievement of the North-west Passage, and the safety of Captain M'Clure and his companions.

To the wonderful supply of musk-ox beef obtained at Melville Island, the health of the Investigators was, no doubt, in a great measure due; but for that providential resource, the "Resolute" and "Intrepid" would have been able to have afforded them but a small supply of fresh or preserved meats, owing to mal-arrangement in the first provisioning of the expedition; and the "Assistance" and "Pioneer" had moreover carried off the lion's share, when they replenished from the "North Star" in August, 1852.

As early as April 14th, 1854, Captain M'Clure and his crew were able to quit the "Resolute" and "Intrepid," and proceed with sledges on foot to Beechey Island,—a pretty good proof that their health had not deteriorated since quitting the Bay of Mercy twelve months previously. One seaman alone was too feeble to walk down; he was suffering from scurvy of the worst form, and soon after succumbed to it, although taken to the "North Star" on a dog-sledge. The "North Star" and the depôt at Beechey Island may now be considered as the spring resting-place of our friends the Investigators; but, to connect one part of this narrative with the other, we must give a slight sketch of the movements of Captain Kellett's

division, as well as of that in Wellington Channel under Captain Belcher.

In the summer of 1853, before the "Resolute" and "Intrepid" left Melville Island, Captain Belcher started for Beechey Island from a spot called Northumberland Sound, at the northern entrance of Wellington Channel. The return sledge-parties of Captains Richards and Osborn had told Captain Belcher of the rescue of the "Investigator," and the accomplishment of the North-west Passage.

It was evident if Captain Kellett got this news home first, and direct from himself, great would be the praise that would fall to his share. The object apparently now became to intercept the "Resolute" or "Intrepid," if they touched at Beechey Island, and make their reports pass through the hands of a senior officer, which Captain Sir E. Belcher happened to be. No time was, therefore, to be lost in opening a communication with Beechey Island; and so important was this deemed, that the search was abandoned, and one sledge-party was left to secure their retreat as best they could after their long and trying journey. Cape Majendie was reached at an early day; and there a boat, with Commander Pullen in her, from the "North Star," joined the "Assistance" and "Pioneer."

From Commander Pullen information was gleaned, that the season in Barrow's Strait did not appear a forward one, and that he had found most water making on the west side of Wellington Channel; indeed the large boat he had come up in was a pretty good proof that water and not ice had been mainly met with by him. Giving him orders that would prevent the "Intrepid" passing Beechey Island, and indeed secure a monopoly of intelligence for the Admiralty to himself*, Captain Belcher sent Commander Pullen back again as quickly as possible, and, finding affairs did not press, commenced surveying that great curve of Wellington Channel wherein the Bays of Baring and Prince Alfred exist, and across which curve a solid floe was still firmly frozen. Almost any time between the 9th and 18th of August, the "Pioneer" could have towed the "Assistance" from Dundas Island direct to Cape De Haven; and indeed we know now, from a trip made by Captain Inglefield in a boat to that cape from Beechey Island, that water to that place would have then been found by the "Pioneer" and "Assistance."

* Captain Inglefield, however, in the "Phœnix," arrived at Beechey Island, and carried home Lieut. Creswell with the despatches of Captain M'Clure.

The log-books of the "Pioneer" and "North Star," and Inglefield's narrative, collectively attest this interesting fact.

Ignorance, however, of the first rules of navigation in arctic seas was eventually to bring about the loss of this fine squadron; and after needless risks, and egregious mistakes, the "Pioneer" and her charge found themselves beset for a second winter at the southern horn of Baring Bay.

People in England, even those most inclined to magnify the horrors of arctic service, had begun to doubt that it was quite as wretched and dangerous as had been supposed, and to hold labours in polar ice rather cheap; a thorough downright catastrophe was necessary to revive their dormant sympathies; the ice would not wreck us, though God knows every opportunity that ignorance or folly would give it of doing so was afforded; and the year 1854 saw such a catastrophe actually accomplished, the total desertion of a squadron flying the British pendant in the Polar Seas.

Totally ignorant of such an arrangement being the intention of the senior officer, the resources of the "Resolute" and "Intrepid" had been so carefully and judiciously husbanded, that with a reduced crew in each ship, they were still ready

to meet the chance of not escaping in 1854; and this was the more creditable to Captains Kellet and M'Clintock, as they had had to victual the additional men and officers from the "Investigator," and had left an ample depôt of provisions and clothing in Melville Island for the use of Collinson, should fate lead him there.

Ever alive to the necessity of not ceasing to search so long as he was in a position to do so, Captain Kellett despatched in the early spring Lieut. Mecham, supported by a party under Mr. Krabbé (master), to revisit the Bay of Mercy in Banks Land, and to place on Princess Royal Island, in Prince of Wales Strait, information of the safety of the crew of the "Investigator,"—a bold and happy act of foresight, as the result proved. Besides this, it was the intention of Captain Kellett to have sent parties later in the spring to connect Lieuts. Osborn and Wynniatt's extreme points of search, and furthermore to have examined down Peel Sound; the central position in which the "Resolute" and "Intrepid" then were, admitting of such measures being executed with the greatest facility.

But in the meantime Captain Richards — who, as we have elsewhere said, was despatched in weather

so severe as to endanger the lives of all his party — reached Captain Kellett with a "confidential" letter from Sir Edward Belcher,—a strange term to apply to a document which involved the needless abandonment of four fine ships. That "confidential" letter is, of course, now a public document, and a highly curious one too. It contains, amongst a long string of erroneous predictions and verbose ambiguities, this paragraph, which is here copied verbatim :—

"Should Captain Collinson fortunately reach you, you will pursue the same course, and not under *any consideration risk* the detention of *another season*. These are the views of the Government*; and having so far explained myself, I will not hamper you with farther instructions than, meet me at Beechey Island with the crews of all vessels, before the 26th August."

Captain Kellett, astonished and pained at the contemplation of such a proceeding, determined not to adopt any such course upon a *confidential letter*, and immediately despatched Captain M'Clintock to Sir Edward Belcher, to point out the perfect feasibility of saving his ships: to assure

* Government (!) and Crown (!) were terms used by that officer to give weight to his own intentions.

him of the provisions and stores, as well as the health of a sufficient number of officers and men being such as would enable him to meet the possible contingency of another winter rather than abandon Her Majesty's ships, when they lay in the very best position for an escape directly the ice broke up in Barrow's Strait, and finally, to use Captain Kellett's own expression, to point out to Sir E. Belcher that the parties concerned in deserting the ships under such circumstances "would deserve to have their jackets taken off their backs." But the remonstrances of Captain Kellett were unavailing. Captain Belcher, finding confidential letters would not do, sent Captain M'Clintock back with an *order* for the abandonment of the "Resolute" and "Intrepid"; and the crew of the "Investigator," who had lived through such trials and hard ships for four winters, stared to see all hands gradually retreating upon Beechey Island, ready to return to England as soon as it should be possible, leaving Franklin's expedition as well as Collinson's ship to their fate. Lieut. Mecham and Mr. Krabbé's parties returned during the summer to Beechey Island, having performed perfect marvels in the distance traversed in the course of their journeys; and Lieut. Mecham on June 12th brought

from the "Investigator's" depôt of provisions on Princess Royal Island deeply interesting information touching the movements of H. M. S. "Enterprise," under Captain Collinson. This was the first news anyone had had of the "Enterprise" since she passed Behring's Strait in 1851; and as in that information, dated August 27th, 1852, Captain Collinson distinctly said, "it is my intention to pursue the channel separating Wollaston from Prince Albert Land, the entrance to which is in lat. 70° 30′ N.," all naturally supposed that, as such a decision upon his part showed an undoubted intention to go eastward, some volunteers, at any rate, would be left behind to help him, in case the "Enterprise," like the "Investigator," should be imprisoned in some ice-bound harbour south-west of Cape Walker. But no, Sir Edward Belcher got rid of all difficulty as to Captain Collinson's safety by the following train of reasoning, as fallacious as the language is confused. He says: —

"However anxious I may be for a similar result* with regard to Captain Collinson and party, still I am thankful that *the records place him in a region free from the perils of arctic*

* He refers to the safety of the "Investigator's" officers and men.

*ice**, in which Captain M'Clure considers no ship could endure. He had at the latest account two modes of escape: one, by the road he came; the other, on which I place but little reliance on account of its difficulties, by the land journey to some of the Hudson Bay posts, unless, indeed, he met Dr. Rae, in which case competent guides would materially alter the face of his difficulties." A crooked state of mind, revealed in crooked language.

Leaving, therefore, Captain Collinson to get out as best he might, the next step was to give a colour to the efforts made to stand by and save the "Assistance" and "Pioneer," which on August 6th broke out of winter quarters, and advanced slowly down channel as the water and pressure from the north began slowly to break up the belt of ice which extended across Wellington Channel.

The ice in Barrow's Strait broke up at the same time; and by the 22nd August the floe of Wellington Channel had broken up and dissolved to a distance of fifteen miles northward from Barrow's Strait. A belt of perhaps twenty miles

* The perils undergone by the "Investigator" in the same latitude, will best convey an idea of the truth of this assertion.

only remained between the ships and the waters communicating with the Atlantic Ocean, and that belt of ice much cracked, and evidently working with every tide; yet it was determined to quit them, and on the 27th August 1854 the last of that ill-fated expedition was deserted, and all the officers and men of H.M.SS. "Assistance," "Resolute," "Pioneer," "Intrepid," and "Investigator" had just got on board the "North Star" and made sail, when the "Phœnix," Captain Inglefield, and "Talbot," store-ship, Captain Jenkins, hove in sight round Cape Riley.

A division of the men and officers then took place, to relieve the crowded decks of the "North Star," the "Phœnix" and "Talbot" each taking a portion. That, and some other small arrangements completed, no time was lost in beating a retreat, and on September 6th all reached Disco, on the coast of Greenland, in safety, and eventually returned to England on September 28th, 1854.

The gallant Investigators found all England's sympathies and feelings enlisted in the war with Russia: and although the members of a naval court-martial, which went through the established form of inquiring into the loss of H.M.S. "Investigator," most honourably acquitted Captain

M'Clure, his officers, and men from any blame on her account, and added the highest encomiums upon the gallantry and zeal exhibited by all, yet, in a public point of view, the ship's company generally felt that few honours were awarded to them in comparison with the sufferings they had so nobly borne. The Admiralty, to evince their approval, dated back Captain M'Clure's commission, as well as that of his first lieutenant and some other officers, to the day on which the North-west Passage was discovered. Her Gracious Majesty shortly afterwards conferred the honour of knighthood upon Captain M'Clure; and assuredly it never was more worthily bestowed.

In the following session of parliament, a select committee of the House of Commons met, to take into consideration the reward due to those who had discovered and achieved the North-west Passage; but in the interim between the arrival of Captain Sir Robert M'Clure in England and the meeting of parliament, news had arrived of Dr. Rae having obtained such certain information of a party from Franklin's missing squadron having passed the intervening unknown space which lay between Barrow's Strait and the coast of North America, that the duty of the committee

became a somewhat responsible one, in so far as awarding the priority of discovery to Franklin or M'Clure, until the papers of the former came to hand.

Lady Franklin in a most able and touching letter, called the earnest attention of the honourable committee to the impossibility of arriving at any certain decision in the absence of all evidence as to Franklin's claim to the priority; and they therefore qualified the award by stating, very justly, that Captain Sir Robert M'Clure, in H.M.S. "Investigator," had discovered *a* North-west Passage, and successfully carried his followers from the Pacific to the Atlantic Ocean by that route, exhibiting himself an example of unflinching perseverance, courage, and zeal, which his officers and men nobly followed, and, to use the words of the honourable committee, "that they performed deeds of heroism which, though not accompanied by the excitement and the glory of the battle-field, yet rival, in bravery and devotion to duty, the highest and most successful achievements of war!" Accordingly a reward of 10,000*l.* sterling was granted to H.M.S. "Investigator," as a token of national approbation.

CHAP. XVIII.

Gloomy Prospect in the Autumn of 1854.—Revival of Desponding Tales.—Sudden Arrival of Intelligence from Dr. Rae.—A Party from Franklin's Ship heard of.—Dr. Rae's Report.—Relics and Proofs of both "Erebus" and "Terror" being in Existence.—The Russian War prevents a Naval Expedition being sent to Barrow's Strait.—The Admiralty direct the Hudson Bay Company to send Mr. Anderson.—Mr. Anderson proceeds in 1855 to the mouth of the Great Fish River.—Verifies the Fact of a Party from the lost Expedition having been there.—No Light thrown upon their Fate.—Neither Bodies, Graves, Clothing, nor Arms discovered.—Remarks upon the Relics discovered.—Probable course adopted by the 'Forlorn Hope.'—Hopes exist of the Mystery still being cleared up.—Distance the Party could have travelled.—Position of the lost Expedition: how lost.—Reason why Fury Beach was not visited by them.—Creditable to England that the Search has never been stayed.—The Admiralty Reward Dr. Rae for giving us Information of Franklin's Position.—General Revival of Interest in the Question.

Nothing could have been more crushing to the hopeful feelings of even the most sanguine or earnest in the search for Franklin, than the sad intelligence which was brought home in October 1854. The labours of the officers and crews of H.M.S. "Assistance," "Resolute," "Intrepid," and

"Pioneer," during three years, had not thrown one ray of light on the sad mystery; and as if to preclude all possibility of any farther steps being taken, all the vessels available for the search had been abandoned, deserted to the mercy of the ice and winds of 74° north latitude. The solemn silence with which the venerable president, of the courts martial which sat to try Captain Belcher, returned him his sword with a bare acquittal, best conveyed the painful feelings which wrung the hearts of all professional men upon that occasion; and all felt that there was no hope of the mystery of Franklin's fate being cleared up in our time, except by some unexpected miracle. But just at that very time, when those who had ever taken a gloomy view of the subject smiled at the realisation of their unfavourable prognostications, and congratulated themselves on having exactly foretold what happened to the "Erebus" and "Terror," either hoisting them up on the top of floes off Newfoundland or squeezing them to destruction in Lancaster Sound,' a letter reached England from Dr. Rae, announcing that he had at last struck upon the clue, and that a portion of Franklin's expedition had reached, and perished at or near, the mouth of the Great Fish River!

Is it presumption to say that the opportune discovery of such a fact at such a moment was a marked instance of Divine interposition? That it should have come from such a quarter is all the more interesting because Dr. Rae, whilst on the journey in which he became possessed of this important information, was, he tells us, purely employed upon geographical research; and prior to starting he announced that fact, coupling it with the remark that he was going where Franklin was not likely to be met with.

His tale is briefly this. He had been sent by the Hudson's Bay Company in 1853 to complete the survey of the long isthmus of land which connects North Somerset with the American continent, under the name of Boothia. He had to connect Captain Sir James Clarke Ross's magnetic pole, or the coast-line about it, with his own discoveries near the Castor and Pollux river.

Repeating his old plan of proceedings in 1846-47, Dr. Rae wintered at the lakes on the isthmus which divides Regent's Inlet from Repulse Bay, and early in the spring of 1854 started with his sledge-party to accomplish his task. Ascending Committee Bay as far as Simpson Peninsula, he then struck westward, taking advantage of a series

of lakes and frozen streams to relieve the labour of sledging across the land which intervened between him and the western waters. Whilst making his way in that direction, Dr. Rae met, on the 20th April, an Esquimaux, who, upon being asked if he had ever seen any ships or white men, replied no, but that a party of white men had died of starvation a long distance to the west of where he then was, and beyond a large river!

Now distance and time are two things that an Esquimaux has great difficulty in conveying his idea of to a European; and Dr. Rae assures us that, although he afterwards had reason to believe that the Great Fish River, then only seventy or eighty miles distant, was the stream referred to, still at the time he could only learn that the spot spoken of was beyond a distant river. Unable to glean more particulars, further than here and there coming across convincing proofs of the natives being in possession of articles from Franklin's ships, Dr. Rae then made an effort northward, as if to combine an execution of his instructions with the purpose (as he assured the writer) of proceeding in the direction the retreating party must have taken when coming down upon the American shore. Circumstances prevented his journey being a successful one.

Dr. Rae returned to the mouth of the Castor and Pollux river, and again retraced his steps overland to Repulse Bay, picking up relics and information, which he condensed into the following Report to the Lords Commissioners of the Admiralty, and with it made the best of his way to England: —

"On the morning of the 20th (*April*) we were met by a very intelligent Esquimaux, driving a dog-sledge laden with musk-ox beef. This man at once consented to accompany us two days' journey, and in a few minutes had deposited his load on the snow, and was ready to join us. Having explained to him my object, he said that the road by which he had come was the best for us; and having lightened the sledges, we travelled with more facility. We were now joined by another of the natives, who had been absent seal-hunting yesterday, but, being anxious to see us, had visited our snow-house early this morning, and then followed up our track. This man was very communicative; and on putting to him the usual questions as to his having seen 'white men' before, or any ships or boats, he replied in the negative, but said that a party of 'Kabloonans' had died of starvation a long distance to the west of where we then were, and beyond a large river.

He stated that he did not know the exact place, that he never had been there, and that he could not accompany us so far. The substance of the information then and subsequently obtained from various sources was to the following effect: —

"In the spring, four winters since, (1850,) while some Esquimaux families were killing seals near the north shore of a large island, named in Arrowsmith's charts King William Land, about forty white men were seen travelling in company southward over the ice, and dragging a boat and sledges with them. They were passing along the west shore of the above-named island. None of the party could speak the Esquimaux language so well as to be understood; but by signs the natives were led to believe that the ship or ships had been crushed by ice, and that they were now going to where they expected to find deer to shoot. From the appearance of the men, all of whom, with the exception of an officer, were hauling on the drag-ropes of the sledge, and looked thin, they were then supposed to be getting short of provisions; and they purchased a small seal, or piece of seal, from the natives. The officer was described as being a tall, stout, middle-aged man. When their day's journey terminated, they pitched tents to rest in.

"At a later date the same season, but previous to the disruption of the ice, the corpses of some thirty persons, and some graves, were discovered on the continent, and five dead bodies on an island near it, about a long day's journey to the N.W. of the mouth of a large stream, which can be no other than Back's Great Fish River, (named by the Esquimaux Oot-koo-hi-ca-lik,) as its description and that of the low shore in the neighbourhood of Point Ogle and Moutreal Island agree exactly with that of Sir George Back. Some of the bodies were in a tent, or tents; others were under the boat, which had been turned over to form a shelter, and some lay scattered about in different directions. Of those seen on the island, it was supposed that one was that of an officer, (chief,) as he had a telescope strapped over his shoulders, and a double-barrelled gun lay underneath him.

"From the mutilated state of many of the bodies, and the contents of the kettles, it is evident that our wretched countrymen had been driven to the dread alternative of cannibalism as a means of sustaining life. A few of the unfortunate men must have survived until the arrival of the wild fowl, (say until the end of May,) as shots were heard and fresh bones and feathers of

geese were noticed near the scene of the sad event.

"There appears to have been an abundant store of ammunition, as the gunpowder was emptied by the natives in a heap on the ground out of the kegs or cases containing it, and a quantity of shot and ball was found below high-water mark, having probably been left on the ice close to the beach before the spring commenced. There must have been a number of telescopes, guns, (several of them double-barrelled,) watches, compasses, &c., all of which seem to have been broken up, as I saw pieces of these different articles with the natives, and I purchased as many as possible, together with some silver spoons and forks, an Order of Merit in the form of a star, and a small silver plate engraved 'Sir John Franklin, K.C.B.'

"Enclosed is a list of the principal articles bought, with a note of the initials, and a rough pen-and-ink sketch of the crests on the forks and spoons. The articles themselves I shall have the honour of handing over to you on my arrival in London.

"None of the Esquimaux with whom I had communication saw the 'white' men, either when living or after death; nor had they ever been at the place where the corpses were found, but had

their information from those who had been there and who had seen the party when travelling on the ice.

"From what I could learn, there is no reason to suspect that any violence had been offered to the sufferers by the natives.

"List of articles purchased from the Equimaux, said to have been obtained at the place where the bodies of the persons were found, viz: —

"One silver table fork — crest, an animal's head, with wings extended above; 3 silver table forks — crest, a bird with wings extended; 1 silver table spoon — crest, with initials 'F.R.M.C.' (Captain Crozier, *Terror*); 1 silver spoon and one fork — crest, bird with laurel branch in mouth, motto, '*Spero meliora;*' 1 silver table spoon, 1 tea spoon, and one dessert fork — crest, a fish's head looking upwards, with laurel branches on each side; 1 silver table fork — initials, 'H.D.S.G.' (Harry D. S. Goodsir, Assistant-Surgeon, *Erebus*); 1 silver table fork — initials, 'A. M'D.' (Alexander M'Donald, Assistant-Surgeon, *Terror*); 1 silver table fork — initials, 'G.A.M.' (Gillies A. Macbean, Second-Master, *Terror*); 1 silver table fork — initials, 'J.T.'; 1 silver dessert spoon — initials,

'J.S.P.' (John S. Peddie, Surgeon, *Erebus*); 1 round silver plate, engraved, 'Sir John Franklin, K.C.B.'; a star or order, with motto, '*Nec aspera terrent*, G. R. III., MDCCCXV.'

"Also a number of other articles with no marks by which they could be recognised, but which will be handed over, with those above-named, to the Secretary of the Hudson Bay Company.

"JOHN RAE, C. F.

"Repulse Bay, July, 1854."

It matters little what portion of the Esquimaux tale is correct, or what fabulous; of one great fact Dr. Rae has assured us, namely that a party from the "Erebus" and "Terror" did reach the coast on or about the Great Fish River. It is fair to infer that the party comprised officers and men from *both* vessels, because the few articles recovered from the natives, bear the names of "Erebus" as well as "Terror." For instance we have Franklin's star of the Guelphic order, and some of Crozier's plate.

It was very natural,—for it occurred in Captain M'Clure's case, as told in the foregoing narrative, —that if the ships of Franklin's expedition had become frozen in in some bay which did not

often clear out of ice, he should have done as M'Clure intended to do, send a party home viâ America, to convey intelligence and seek succour. Franklin knew that when on a former occasion, in 1833, Sir John Ross had got into difficulties in the "Victory," and was missing, a party was at once organised, and sent down the Great Fish River to seek for him. Might not Sir John Franklin have fairly supposed that as much would be done in his behalf? How could he know of the opposition all propositions of such a rational nature were likely to meet with from persons consulted by the Admiralty.

The public mind was too deeply engaged in the sufferings of the British army upon the heights of Sebastopol, to grant the attention it merited to the interesting intelligence brought to England by Dr. Rae or to the collateral proof brought home by Captain Collinson (who had happily escaped with the "Enterprise") from another point about the same distance from the north shore of King William's Land as the Great Fish River. It consisted of a piece of wood-work, which must have belonged to either the "Erebus" or the "Terror," and which was found by accident upon an island near the "Enterprise's" winter quarters in Cambridge Bay.

The Lords Commissioners of the Admiralty took the opinion of some arctic authorities, upon the subject of what could be done towards still farther clearing up the tale brought home by Dr. Rae; for there was much about it vague, and calculated to keep alive hopes of the most distressing nature to those deeply interested in the crews of Franklin's ships. A gigantic war was pressing upon the resources of our navy both in ships and men, none of them could then be spared; and to meet the outcry for some effort to be made to ascertain if it really was the mouth of the Great Fish River that Franklin's travellers had reached, the Hudson's Bay Company were again requested to send out a party to that locality.

Dr. Rae having declined to take charge of the party which was equipped for this purpose, it was consigned to the care of Mr. James Anderson, a chief factor of the company, an officer of high reputation and much experience as a traveller. Lady Franklin, however, earnestly and solemnly protested against this expedition; she foretold the improbability of its ever reaching King William's Land, and short of that the result would be as inconclusive as Dr. Rae's report, and a loss of very valuable time.

Labouring under many disadvantages, from the short time given to equip and start, Mr. Anderson commenced his descent, from Fort Resolution to the mouth of the Great Fish River, on June 22nd, 1855, with three canoes of wooden framing but birch-bark planking, *without an Esquimaux interpreter*. On July 30th, at the rapids below Lake Franklin, three Esquimaux lodges were seen, and various articles were found, denoting that some of the unfortunate men they were in search of had been there. The foot note to this page is worthy of careful perusal—we will refer to it again.*

Pushing on, Point Beaufort was reached, and at last Montreal Island landed upon. "There," says Mr. Anderson, "on a high ridge of rocks at the S.E.

* Extract from *Mr. Anderson's Report*, vide Blue Book.—"On the 30th, at the rapids below Lake Franklin, three Esquimaux lodges were seen on the opposite shore, and shortly after an elderly man crossed to us. After the portage was made we crossed over, and immediately perceived various articles belonging to a boat, such as tent-poles and kayack paddles made out of ash oars, pieces of mahogany, elm, oak, and pine; also copper and sheet-iron boilers, tin soup tureens, pieces of instruments, a letter nip with the date 1843, a broken handsaw, chisels, &c. Only one man was left at the lodges; but the women, who were very intelligent, made us understand, by words and signs, that these articles came from a boat, and that the white men belonging to it had died of starvation."

point of the island, a number of Esquimaux *caches* were found, and, besides seal oil, various articles were found belonging to a boat or ship, such as chain-hooks, chisels, blacksmith's shovel and cold chisel, tin oval boiler, a bar of unwrought iron about three feet long, one and a half inch broad, and a quarter of an inch thick; small pieces of rope, bunting, and a number of sticks strung together, on one of which was cut 'Mr. Stanley' (surgeon of the *Erebus*). A little lower down was a large quantity of chips, shavings, and ends of plank of pine, elm, ash, oak, and mahogany, evidently sawn by unskilful hands; every chip was turned over, and on one of them was found the word 'Terror' carved. It was evident that this was the spot where the boat was cut up by the Esquimaux; but not even a scrap of paper could be discovered, and though rewards were offered, and the most minute search made over the whole island, not a vestige of the remains of our unfortunate countrymen could be discovered."

The party next examined Point Ogle, where only a small piece of cod-line and a strip of cotton was found; and on the 8th August they began to retrace their steps, having held no communication with, indeed seen, no Esquimaux be-

yond the one man and few women at the rapids below Franklin Lake, and never been able to reach King William's Land. This information reached us early in 1856, and goes to confirm Dr. Rae's supposition, that the Great Fish River was the stream upon which the party he had heard of had retreated; but so far as clearing up the mystery of what became of them, the whole affair, if possible, is in a more unsatisfactory state than ever.

Taking it for granted that the Esquimaux did see thirty or forty men with a boat, as Dr. Rae asserts, what has become of them? If they did, when they reached the continent, become desperate with misery, and commit cannibalism,—the practice is by no means rare in those wild regions, and it would assuredly prolong life: — where are the survivors? Is it likely they sat down there and died one after the other? If they were so lost to their own interests and safety as to remain, would not the survivors have scraped the earth over the bones of those who perished first?

Every arctic traveller knows that the tender and oily bones of the seal—even the brittle ones of birds — are found preserved over the whole extent of the arctic regions visited by us. What, then, has become of the bones of thirty men?

Five years after the "Erebus" and "Terror" left Beechey Island, in Barrow's Strait, all those who visited the scene of their winter quarters, found *clothing*, *scraps of paper*, and the thousand signs of Europeans having been there, looking just as fresh as the day they were left, and that in a far worse climate than Montreal Island. Esquimaux were not likely to have used dead men's bones. If they had European clothing in their possession, it is hardly likely that they could have concealed it entirely. There is not a musket, pike, or cutlass produced: the party were not likely to have gone there unarmed; indeed the Esquimaux acknowledged having seen both powder, shot, and ball. And as to Mr. Anderson's theory of the wind blowing away or covering their journals and papers, because his nautical almanacs suffered, it is purely assuming that the officer who headed Franklin's party was such an idiot as to leave his papers strewed about the surface of Montreal Island, instead of putting them in a *cache*, where, as arctic discovery proves, papers have been preserved and discovered after longer intervals of time than perhaps any other climate would admit of.

Looking therefore at the evidence before us, it amounts simply to this, that

"A party from the 'Erebus' and 'Terror' did reach the Great Fish River, and have left traces at Montreal Island and at the first rapids in ascending the stream!" Further than this, all is apocryphal. Mr. Anderson very naturally went upon his journey, firmly believing every iota of the translated account of Dr. Rae's interpreter; indeed in the absence of any means of communication with the one old man and few women whom he did see, he had no other resource than to connect the traces which lay before him with the report previously made public. But sailors may be allowed to put a sailor's explanation to what lay before Mr. Anderson; and the following is our version of the tale it told: —

On Montreal Island Mr. Anderson found, he says, "a quantity of chips, and *shavings*, and the ends of *plank* of pine, elm, ash, oak, and mahogany, evidently sawn by unskilful hands."

Now, no boat supplied to the "Erebus" or "Terror" from Her Majesty's yards, which any party of men could have dragged a hundred miles over ice, would have been constructed of *plank* of so many descriptions; but it is very certain that a party retreating to the Great Fish River, and knowing the long series of rapids and portages

in that stream, would have carried with them materials such as plank, which, with the framing of their large boat, would form rough canoes fit for their purpose.

Mr. Anderson distinctly says, "chips and *shavings*." Now a savage, who had never seen a planing instrument, was not likely to be able to produce shavings. After informing us that the plank was evidently cut by unskilful hands, Mr. Anderson says, "*every chip was turned over, and on one of them was found the word 'Terror' carved!*" Surely that ominous word is a mute witness against Esquimaux having been the men who there laboured; yet in the next paragraph we read, —

"It was evident that this was the spot where the boat was cut up by the Esquimaux!".

Surely no such fair inference can be drawn. That the party brought carpenters' tools with them, we have the proof in Mr. Anderson discovering, at the lodges near the rapids, "*a broken hand-saw, chisels, &c.*"; and perhaps if a careful list could be procured of every article seen there or at Repulse Bay, some more interesting evidence might be obtained; for even as a straw will show the course of a great stream, so may some in-

significant trifle throw sudden light upon this sad subject.

The existence of traces further up the river than Montreal Island is a significant fact; and in support of the idea that on Montreal Island preparations were made to ascend the stream, we have another proof in the ash oars being cut or reduced into paddles,—a very necessary measure for a party about to go up narrow and tortuous rivers, and totally unlikely to have been done by the Esquimaux, who have no kyacks or canoes in that part of America. Some of these paddles were found at the rapids likewise.

It is true the women at this spot made signs that these articles came from a boat whose crew perished of starvation; but they did not give a single proof of the truth of the tale, or point out the grave of one of the unfortunate party.

Dr. Rae, zealous for the character of the Esquimaux, repudiates indignantly all idea of their having been treacherous, nor is it at all desirable to give rise to any bloody suppositions upon the matter; but any one, who will carefully read over the able paper of Captain Maguire, in the Appendix of this work, can, as easily as the most experienced traveller, form a correct idea of the

character of the Esquimaux generally; and he will then agree with us in thinking that the savage of the polar regions, though not naturally cruel or treacherous, would, like most others, consult his own interests rather than the dictates of humanity, when such a windfall as a boat's crew of starving, scorbutic men, carrying with them untold wealth in the shape of wood, iron, and canvas, fell into their hands, and when they confessed, as those poor fellows evidently did, their direful necessity.

Some of Franklin's people may, we think, have died of disease or starvation at the place upon the continent spoken of by the natives; but that spot has not been reached by us as yet. Others evidently got to an island; there the Esquimaux say the officer perished, and five men likewise. Whether or no, such an island as Montreal Island was very likely to have been chosen by them whereon to await the opening up of the Great Fish River; they would be in a good position for commencing their canoe voyage, and be less likely, whilst employed constructing canoes or rafts, to be interrupted by natives. Granting, therefore, that some perished at each place spoken of by the natives (though, until there is proof, people are justified in saying Englishmen can live where

Esquimaux can)—granting even that the remainder did so far forget their manhood as to eat the flesh of their shipmates, is it unreasonable to suppose that, when the river opened, some few of those unfortunates started with what they had constructed, abandoning all their unnecessary gear on the island, and at the first portage?

They might have ascended far, and fallen in detail, and yet, never, in such a water-intersected region, have been discovered by Mr. Anderson in his descent—the more especially if they, taking Sir George Back's chart, had followed his old track—a track from which Mr. Anderson departed considerably, and with advantage to himself and his party as far as rapidity of journey was concerned. As to holding out a hope of any straggler surviving amongst Esquimaux, or Indians, it is not our desire to do so; but those who, by following up a similar train of argument as ourselves, arrive at a hope of such a pleasing and consolatory nature, ought not to be ridiculed for doing so.

They who have kept alive hope, who have urged on expedition after expedition, in spite of failure, in spite of ridicule, and in spite of uncharitable imputations of mania or interested motives, have now reason to feel happy that such

trifles did not check their efforts; it remains yet to be seen whether perseverance will not still lift the curtain of this sad but glorious tragedy.

It is not alone the fate of those forty men, that we desire to know—they were but a fraction of the lost expedition; there are still one hundred souls unaccounted for! and two of Her Majesty's ships!

We, who have reduced arctic travelling to a mere arithmetical calculation, know very nearly the distance a body of sailors numbering forty could have come from, dragging a heavy wooden boat over the ice, besides the quantity of articles which have been enumerated elsewhere, and which formed, doubtless, but a small portion of what they had with them. Taking, therefore, the weight dragged by the forty men as 200 lbs. per man, and the distance accomplished daily about ten miles, an allowance extremely liberal for debilitated seamen, we have the precedents of Captains Richards, Osborn, and Penny (who all have had to carry heavy wooden boats as far as possible over the ice) for saying that a journey of about fifteen days, or 150 miles, would be about the utmost distance they could have come from; the more so that sledge-travelling was then but little understood, and

that the extent of the sledge journeys made from Beechey Island by Franklin's people, as denoted by their cairns, do not exhibit any marked improvement in that respect, Cape Bowden in Wellington Channel, and Cresswell's Tower in Barrow's Strait, being, as far as we know, the limit of their explorations in that quarter; and neither of them would entail a journey of fifty miles.

That the "Erebus" and "Terror" are somewhere within the limits of the unsearched area about King William's Land, everything now denotes. One hundred and fifty or two hundred miles from Montreal Island, northward, carries us into the centre of this space, and where Victoria Strait is split in two by the large island called King William's Land. In and about Cape Felix on that island, or near the magnetic pole in Boothia, they most probably got beset; for had they been on Victoria Land, where natives, game, and fish abound, they would, it is fair to infer, have sent their "forlorn hope" along it towards the Copper-mine or Mackenzie River. How they reached that supposed point, with their ships, time and a discovery of their journals will alone tell. Whether by rounding the *west* side of Prince of Wales Land, and passing down a channel

which some suppose to exist in a south-east direction between it and Victoria Land, or whether, as appears most natural, they took the fine and promising channel which offered to the southward between Cape Burney and Cape Walker, now called Peel Sound, and so struck the American continent, we can only surmise. But the absence of all cairns, or signs of their having been detained or having landed on either coast of Prince of Wales Land, as far as it is now known, or of North Somerset, leads to the natural supposition that they are nearer to King William's Land than to any other spot—perhaps in some indentation on its northern coast, into which they ran during a late and stormy season, as M'Clure did in the "Investigator," and John Ross did in the "Victory," never to escape with their ships. It has been argued against the existence of Franklin's ships in this quarter, that he would assuredly have visited the Fury Beach depôt, in Regent's Inlet. We reply to this, that Franklin, through his ice-master and others in his expedition, knew well how worthless it was for his purpose. He knew that, since it had been formed, Sir John Ross had provisioned the "Victory" from it, that he had retreated upon it, and lived on it with

his crew nearly twelve months, and eventually equipped himself there prior to his escape in 1833. After that some whalers had swept nearly everything off the beach; and, to escape the consequences of an Admiralty prosecution, one of the vessels had thrown into Peterhead Harbour a quantity of provisions she had carried off as plunder from the "Fury" depôt. All this Franklin knew; and when Lieut. Robinson of the "Enterprise" reached that supposed depôt in 1849, from Leopold Harbour, he found little there besides a cask or two of flour and a few raisins—showing how wisely Franklin had done in not falling back upon it.

It is needless to discuss the question of who has been to blame for the misdirected efforts of the nation, or to lament the zeal and energy of officers expended in an unsuccessful search for Franklin. It could not, indeed be otherwise: the chart as it stood in 1848 was a blank; and were it so at the present hour what clue should we now have as to where to seek Franklin, even if two boat-parties, instead of one, had been heard of on the American shore? The labours of those employed have assuredly narrowed the area to the mere work of one season, with a properly-equipped expedition, in Peel Sound;

and to those who blame us for having spent time in searching to the north-west of Beechey Island, the simplest reply is, that we glory in having had the hope accorded to us in 1852, of Franklin's expedition being in that direction. It kept up the interest of the world upon the subject; and it enabled us, though unsuccessful there, to say we never desponded, and never believed that they would not be found, or that they turned back from Beechey Island; and England may boast that, owing to that and other circumstances, she never relaxed her efforts until a certain clue to their position was secured. It is, undoubtedly, for the discovery of that clue, with the certainty that it holds out, that by following it up steadily we shall soon know the fate of Franklin's and Crozier's ships' companies, that the Admiralty have, very justly, rewarded Dr. Rae with a portion of the twenty thousand pounds awarded by Parliament; and although such a reward does not come under the strict interpretation of the Act, still there is no doubt of their Lordships having generously exercised their perogative, in stretching the rule, and rewarding an active and zealous arctic traveller for obtaining a trace which is worth twice the sum, and which has given fresh hope and spirit to all

who think upon the matter, as the two following memorials will show. The first emanates from her who has been the mainspring of the search, her to whose untiring energy we owe the accomplishment by naval officers of the discovery of the North-west Passage, and the now perfect certainty of discovering the long lost and sought "Erebus" and "Terror"; the other, promoted by Sir Roderick Murchison, and signed by the larger portion of the scientific men of our day, who have turned their attention to the subject, attests that we are not singular in our opinions.

LADY FRANKLIN'S LETTER.

"60. Pall Mall,
11th July, 1856.

"My Lords,

"Three months ago I felt constrained to address a letter to your Lordships, requesting that you would be pleased to delay your adjudication of the reward claimed by Dr. Rae for ascertaining the fate of my husband's expedition, until such time as the result of a more complete and final search could be known. I implored your Lordships to

adopt such measures as would set this question at rest, and at the same time was compelled to represent that your refusal to do this would force upon me the painful alternative of taking the burden of an expedition upon myself, at whatever cost and under great disadvantage.

"To this letter I have not been honoured with any reply; but, notwithstanding, it seemed to me and to others not unreasonable to interpret your silence in a manner not unfavourable to my wishes, inasmuch as your Lordships were well aware that so long as no adverse decision was announced to me, I was precluded from taking any steps for advancing my private expedition, which depended entirely on the non-adoption of the other. Even when I read in the *Gazette*, after two months and more had elapsed, that your Lordships, disregarding my request, had given the reward of 10,000*l.* to Dr. Rae, I was still unwilling to regard this act as an absolute rejection of my petition for further search, since in that light, or with such an object in view, it might have been practicable to announce it at a much earlier period, and thus relieve me from suspense, and set my hands free for action. But besides this, I was aware that a memorial to the same effect as my own petition,

signed by the most scientific men in London, and embracing the opinions of all the chief arctic officers, had been presented to the head of her Majesty's Goverment (by whom it was kindly received); and I indulged the hope that it could scarcely fail to receive your Lordships' favourable consideration.

"Thus, between doubt and hope, between occasional misgivings and reviving confidence, but withal in constant and harassing anxiety, I have passed three long months (precious months to me, who required them all for my own expedition, if that great burden were at last to fall upon me), till at last a time has arrived when the equipment of a private expedition is no longer possible, and a season of probably unexampled openness for ice navigation is passing away.

"I feel sure that if your Lordships would only do me the favour of considering for a moment the painful position in which I have thus been and am still placed, without a single word vouchsafed to me either to confirm my hopes or to extinguish them, deprived of any means but such as I had a reasonable objection to, of securing public feeling in my behalf, whilst the Arctic papers (including my appeal to your Lordships), which were called

for in the House of Commons, continued to be withheld, unable thus to make use of the present or to calculate on the future, you would feel that a great hardship — nay, that a great injustice, for such I feel it to be — has been inflicted on me.

"Yet, great as this trial has been, it receives aggravation from the knowledge that I am not alone affected by it. I abstain from obtruding on you details of private matters, however they might serve to illustrate this aspect of my embarrassing position; but I feel sure that you will deem it worthy of your kind and serious attention, when I inform you that the distinguished individual who has generously offered me his gratuitous services for the command of my private expedition, should I be unhappily reduced to this extremity, has done so at the sacrifice of all his own professional and private interests, in the purest spirit of sympathy with my anxieties and of devotion to a holy cause. And I might say much more than this, if I felt permitted to do so. Your Lordships, however, will, I am sure, perceive that I cannot indefinitely prolong the state of uncertainty in which my noble minded and generous friend is now placed; and that

it is my duty either to release him from his promise, as I would so gladly do were I sure that my cause were safe in your hands, or enable him at once to commence independent operations.

"Regretting deeply that you have, as I learn, come to a decision adverse to the immediate starting of a vessel by the Eastern route, since I fully recognise the possibility of following my husband's track on that side down Peel Channel, I yet may be permitted to express the opinion I have long entertained, confirmed as it is by that of your late eminent hydrographer, Sir Francis Beaufort, and by that of Captains Collinson and Maguire, that the route by Behring Strait, though longer in distance, is of surer and safer accomplishment, and that a vessel despatched this autumn to Behring Strait would probably arrive at the spot to be searched in a shorter time than by the other. Captain Collinson, whose experience is the highest that can be adduced on this point, has no doubt that he could carry even such a heavy sailing ship as the 'Enterprise' without the aid of steam, in one season only, to the very locality where the remains of the 'Erebus' and 'Terror' are probably now lying, and where it is at least certain that the

Esquimaux hold the secret of their fate, and of the pillage they have acquired from the catastrophe.

"This opinion of Captain Collinson as to the facility of a vessel's reaching the place of its destination in one season by way of Behring Strait, is shared by Captain Maguire, as expressed in a letter which I have permission to enclose. Your Lordships will also perceive therein another reason for the adoption of this route, which has not hitherto received the attention its extreme importance deserves, namely, the facility it gives of bringing the vessel into close contact with the Esquimaux, it being Captain Maguire's opinion (as it is that of Mr. Anderson, the late commander of the boat party down the Great Fish River), that the tranquil presence of a vessel is necessary to extract the whole truth from the natives. These people are not wanting in sagacity, and if they see nothing but a boat or sledge-party, they will be sure to calculate on the very limited resources of such a party, that it will soon return whence it came, and rid them of unwelcome investigations. It is also to be recollected that the Esquimaux are in the habit of making spring and autumn migrations, so that time would be required to enable the intelligence that white men were on the coast to

permeate throughout the country, and thus reach the ears of any stragglers that may yet remain of the crews of the missing vessels.

"I would entreat of your Lordships, should you doubt the accuracy of my statements, to call before you those two able and experienced officers, Captain Collinson and Captain Maguire, one of whom has brought back his ship and crew in perfect safety, after a navigation in Arctic waters of unexampled length and importance, whilst the other, within a more restricted field of action at Point Barrow, succeeded so well in his endeavours to gain the confidence and co-operation of the natives, as to be an earnest of his success in any other quarter.

"I mention these two distinguished officers as being especially qualified to speak of the advantages and disadvantages of the route suggested, not forgetting that Captains Osborn and Richards are also on the spot, equally able to submit to your Lordships, if honoured by your reference, all that might have been said, in favour or otherwise, of the route which you have pronounced to be impracticable at this advanced season. All are alike ignorant that I am expressing this unbounded confidence in their capacity and zeal,

in the humble hope of reminding your Lordships that if you give little weight to anything I can advance, as coming from an incompetent or too interested person, there are those at hand whose qualifications, whose duty towards you, and whose sense of responsibility, remove them widely from such disparaging circumstances.

"Whilst this subject is still under deliberation, I commit the prayer of my present appeal to your serious and humane consideration, believing that the honour of my country is no less concerned in the result, than are my own personal interests and those of my fellow-sufferers in calamity.

"I have the honour to be, my Lords,

"Your obedient servant,

(Signed) "JANE FRANKLIN.

"To the Lords Commissioners of the Admiralty."

MEMORIAL

PRESENTED BY

SIR RODERICK IMPEY MURCHISON,

G.C.S.S.; D.C.L.; M.A.; F.R.S.; F.L.S.; HON. MEM. R.S. ED.; R.I.A.

To the Right Hon. Viscount Palmerston, M.P., G.C.B.

"London, June 5.

"Impressed with the belief that Her Majesty's missing ships, the "Erebus" and "Terror," or their remains, are still frozen up at no great distance from the spot whence certain relics of Sir John Franklin and his crews were obtained by Dr. Rae, — we whose names are undersigned, whether men of science and others who have taken a deep interest in arctic discovery, or explorers who have been employed in the search for our lost countrymen, beg earnestly to impress upon your Lordship the desirableness of sending out an expedition to satisfy the honour of our country, and clear up a mystery which has excited the sympathy of the civilised world.

"This request is supported by many persons well versed in arctic surveys, who, seeing that the proposed expedition is to be directed *to one limited area only*, are of opinion that the object is attainable, and with little risk.

"We can scarcely believe that the British Government, which to its great credit has made so many efforts in various directions to discover even the route pursued by Franklin, should cease to prosecute research now that the locality has been clearly indicated where the vessels or their remains must lie,—including, as we hope, records which will throw fresh light on arctic geography, and dispel the obscurity in which the voyage and fate of our countrymen are still involved.

"Although most persons have arrived at the conclusion that there can now be no survivors of Franklin's expedition, yet there are eminent men in our own country and in America who hold a contrary opinion. Dr. Kane, of the United States, for example, who has distinguished himself by pushing farther to the north in search of Franklin than any other individual, and to whom the Royal Geographical Society has recently awarded its Founders' Gold Medal, thus speaks (in a letter to the benevolent Mr. Grinnell):—'I am really in doubt as to the preservation of human life. I well know how glad I would have been, had my duty to others permitted me, to have taken refuge among the Esquimaux of Smith Strait and Etah Bay. Strange as it may seem to you, we regarded

the coarse life of these people with eyes of envy, and did not doubt but that we could have lived in comfort upon their resources. It required all my powers, moral and physical, to prevent my men from deserting to the Walrus Settlements, and it was my final intention to have taken to Esquimaux life had Providence not carried us through in our hazardous escape.'

"But passing from speculation, and confining ourselves alone to the question of finding the missing ships or their records, we would observe that no land expedition down the Back River, like that which, with great difficulty, recently reached Montreal Island, can satisfactorily accomplish the end we have in view. The frail birch-bark canoes in which Mr. Anderson conducted his search with so much ability, the dangers of the river, the sterile nature of the tract near its embouchure, and the necessary failure of provisions, prevented the commencement, even, of such a search as can alone be satisfactorily and thoroughly accomplished by the crew of a man-of-war, — to say nothing of the moral influence of a strongly armed party remaining in the vicinity of the spot until the confidence of the natives be obtained.

"Many arctic explorers, independently of those

whose names are appended, and who are absent on service, have expressed their belief that there are several routes by which a *screw*-vessel could so closely approach the area in question as to clear up all doubt.

"In respect to one of these courses, or that by Behring Strait, along the coast of North America, we know that a single sailing-vessel passed to Cambridge Bay within 150 miles of the mouth of the Back River, and returned home unscathed,—its commander having expressed his conviction that the passage in question is so constantly open that ships can navigate it without difficulty in one season. Other routes, whether by Regent Inlet, Peel Sound, or across from Repulse Bay, are preferred by officers whose experience in arctic matters entitles them to every consideration; whilst in reference to two of these routes it is right to state that vast quantities of provisions have been left in their vicinity.

"Without venturing to suggest which of these plans should be adopted, we earnestly beg your Lordship to sanction without delay such an expedition as, in the judgment of a committee of arctic voyagers and geographers, may be considered best adapted to secure the object.

"We would ask your Lordship to reflect upon the great difference between a clearly defined voyage to a narrow and circumscribed area, within which the missing vessels or their remains must lie, and those former necessarily tentative explorations in various directions, the frequent allusions to the difficulty of which, in regions far to the north of the voyage now contemplated, have led persons unacquainted with geography to suppose that such a modified and limited attempt as that which we propose involves farther risk and may call for future researches. The very nature of the former expeditions exposed them, it is true, to risk, since regions had to be traversed which were totally unknown; while the search we ask for is to be directed to a circumscribed area, the confines of which have already been reached without difficulty by one of Her Majesty's vessels.

"Now, inasmuch as France, after repeated fruitless efforts to ascertain the fate of La Pérouse, no sooner heard of the discovery of some relics of that eminent navigator, than she sent out a searching expedition to collect every fragment pertaining to his vessels, so we trust that those arctic researches which have reflected much honour upon our country may not be abandoned at the very moment

when an explanation of the wanderings and fate of our lost navigators seems to be within our grasp.

"In conclusion, we further earnestly pray that it may not be left to the efforts of individuals of another and kindred nation already so distinguished in this cause, nor yet to the noble-minded widow of our lamented friend, to make an endeavour which can be so much more effectively carried out by the British Government.

"We have the honour to be," &c.,

"F. Beaufort, R. I. Murchison, F. W. Beechey, Wrottesley, E. Sabine, Egerton Ellesmere, W. Whewell, R. Collinson, W. H. Sykes, C. Daubeny, J. Fergus, P. E. de Strzelecki, W. H. Smyth, A. Majendie, R. FitzRoy, E. Gardiner, Fishbourne, R. Brown, G. Macartney, L. Horner, W. H. Fitton, Lyon Playfair, T. Thorp, C. Wheatstone, W. J. Hooker, J. D. Hooker, J. Arrowsmith, P. La Trobe, W. A. B. Hamilton, R. Stephenson, J. E. Portlock, C. Piazzi Smyth, C. W. Pasley, G. Rennie, J. P. Gassiot, G. B. Airy, J. F. Burgoyne."

TABLE showing the MEAN HEIGHT of BAROMETER, with the Temperature of the Air on board H.M.S. "Investigator," from August 1850 to March 1853.

Year and Month.	Barometer. Maximum.	Barometer. Minimum.	Barometer. Mean.	Temperature of Air. Maximum.	Temperature of Air. Minimum.	Temperature of Air. Mean.	Mean Force of Wind.	Yearly Abstract.
1850.								
August -	30·000	29·350	29·731	+50	+27	+39·5	3·5	Barometer. Max. 30·000; Min. 29·160; Mean, 29·528.
Sept. -	·050	·470	·810	+45	−1	+29·3	3·6	
Oct. -	·185	·280	·651	+34	−28	+9·2	2·0	Air. Max. + 5; Min. — 40.; Mean, — 4·16.
Nov. -	·270	·100	·729	+7	−32	−10·3	3·1	
Dec. -	·260	·480	·378	+4	−40	−23·4	2·5	
1851.								
Jan. -	·370	·400	·385	−13	−51	−32·5		Barometer. Maximum - 30·750 Minimum - 29·000 Mean - - - 29·[illegible] Air. Maximum - +52·0 Minimum - −31·0 Mean - - - +2·34
Feb. -	·620	·030	·508	−9	−51	−37·7		
March -	·720	·338	·946	−5	−51	−29·8		
April -	·610	·410	30·037	+38	−32	−4·8	3·1	
May -	·600	·500	·033	+47	−5	+19·9	2·2	
June -	·150	·470	29·832	+53	+27	+39·1	2·5	
July -	·000	·450	·716	+52	+33	+37·5	3·0	
August -	·400	·200	·865	+52	+31	+37·6	2·8	
Sept. -	·270	·470	·874	+45	+1	+23·6	2·1	
Oct. -	·200	·300	·877	+36	−22	+9·3	1·9	
Nov. -	·750	·030	30·037	+10	−40	−15·2	1·8	
Dec. -	·810	·480	·046	+11	−44	−26·0	3·9	
1852.								
Jan. -	·600	·280	29·841	+8	−51	−37·3	2·4	Barometer. Maximum - 31·000 Minimum - 29·370 Mean - - 29·906 Air. Maximum - +52 Minimum - −52 Mean - +0·10
Feb. -	31·000	·070	·777	−1	−47	−25·6	3·1	
March -	31·000	·410	30·082	+3	−32	−20·4	2·0	
April -	30·430	·360	·164	+31	−38	−1·4	2·3	
May - -	·250	·000	29·987	+37	−25	+19·2	2·6	
June - -	·100	·430	·216	+31	+11	+22·5	3·1	
July - -	·000	·370	·240	+52	+30	+36·7	2·9	
August -	·170	·400	·816	+38	+19	+33·3	2·0	
Sept. -	·100	·070	·785	+38	−4	+20·1	3·5	
Oct. -	·300	·440	·896	+36	−30	−3·6	2·3	
Nov. -	·680	·400	·578	+5	−43	−15·5	3·1	
Dec. -	·670	29·970	·944	−4	−48	+26·1	3·7	
1853.								
Jan. -	30.120	29·180	29·748	−15	−55	−42·97	4·05	Barometer. Max. 30·72; Min. 29·180; Mean, 29·969. Air. Max. + 17; Min. — 62; Mean, — 29·92.
Feb. -	·580	·400	30·095	−13	−57	−38·50	2·80	
March -	·720	·540	·048	+17	−56	−29·4	3·30	

Lt. MERCY BAY, BANKS LAND, lat. 70° 6′ N., long. 118° 13′ W.

ROBERT M'CLURE, Commander.

Her Majesty's Ship "Investigator."

Game killed in the Arctic Regions.

	Number killed.	Average Weight each.	Total Weight.
Musk-oxen - -	7	278 lbs.	1,945 lbs.
Deer - - -	110	70 lbs.	7,716 "
Hares - - -	169	6 "	1,014 "
Grouse - - -	186	Not weighed.	—
Ducks - - -	198	"	—
Geese - - -	29	"	—
Wolves - - -	2	"	—
Bears - - -	4	"	—

Total head killed - - - 1,005.

APPENDIX.

APPENDIX.

NARRATIVE OF COMMANDER MAGUIRE, WINTERING AT POINT BARROW.

In accordance with my last communication, I proceeded to sea from Port Clarence on the morning of the 21st of August, and with a favourable breeze passed through Behring Straits by the eastern passage, on the following day at noon. A succession of contrary winds delayed our progress to the N. E. to a much greater extent than was considered favourable to ensure our complete success of rounding Point Barrow, at that advanced period of the season.

In our passage to the northward we passed several whale ships cruising in squadrons, a caution they seem to have prudently adopted, for the benefit of affording mutual assistance in the event of disaster. Their success up to that time seemed to be indifferent; and we have been since informed by natives from Point Hope, that whales have become very scarce on the coast, since the ships have come in pursuit of them. The last whale ship (French) seen by us was on the morning of the 25th of August, in lat. 69° 30′ N., long. 167° 43′ W., carrying all sail to the southward. We soon afterwards made the ice in heavy floes, and tacked in shore to ascertain its distance from

the land, when we found the contrary winds had done us good service by opening a free passage of from ten to fifteen miles, in which we beat to the N.E., making but slow progress until the night of the 2nd of September, when a slant from the southward, with a fast-falling barometer, warned us that a change of weather was at hand. Our distance from Point Barrow, now reduced to fifty miles, I thought we could accomplish before the ice set in shore, and therefore pushed forward under all sail and rounded it at the distance of one mile, on the following day at noon, September 3rd.

The approach to the channel leading between the sandy islets, that form the protection we were about to seek for the winter in Elson's Bay, was found, contrary to our expectations, shoal and intricate, making it necessary to anchor the ship and sound out the passage. If it was found not to afford sufficient water, of which there was a doubt, our position was not one to lose time in, shut out, and close down on an exposed shore, with a gale coming on that would soon have loaded it with ice. Having ascertained, as expeditiously as possible, that there was about nine inches to spare across a shoal before we got to deep water, the anchor was weighed, and after making a few tacks, the narrowness of the channel and the ship taking the ground twice, made it advisable to anchor and kedge under shelter of the spit. A fortunate turn in the current enabled us to effect this, as by the time the warps had been run out, the gale had increased so much as to render it unsafe to trip the anchor; however, finding a strong weather current setting, it was weighed, and the ship warped into a wild-looking anchorage for protection, in a gale of wind, no land being visible, except the low sand

spit of Point Barrow and the islet adjoining, not more than five feet above the level of the sea, which broke over them with great violence during the height of the gale. These are again guarded by the shoals lying off, on which the drift ice grounds, making the anchorage, when gained, secure, but difficult of access or egress. Daylight next morning showed us how fortunate we had been in getting shelter; the gale, now veered to west, was unabated; the sea broke heavily over the shoals passed yesterday, and against the sand spits to within a short distance of the ship, whilst the offing was encumbered with heavy ice, becoming gradually closer with the gale. As we found a strong current setting to windward, I had no doubt of the ship holding on, although the confined space of the anchorage did not admit veering more than thirty fathoms of cable. In the afternoon the gale began to moderate, and on the following day the ship was moved to a more secure berth, near the position selected for winter quarters, where we remained until the ice set fast on the 24th of September.

A succession of strong gales and thick weather, for the following week, retarded our preparations, consisting chiefly in collecting driftwood, not found here in any abundance. From this material the plank for housing-in was sawed, and the remains stacked for the winter firing. Advantage was also taken of every opportunity to send a boat to sound the channel, knowing the difficulty of the task after the ice had formed; and on its breaking up we should be too anxious to move with it, to have time for that purpose. On the 25th, pancake ice began to form in the bay, and drift out rapidly with the current. A party was sent to haul the launch up on the adjacent islet, to be out of reach of the natives; this service was performed by

Mr. G. T. Gordon, mate, who, when returning in the gig with a fresh and favourable wind, was unable to push his way through the young ice, and was carried in it through the passage into the offing. In this distressing dilemma a second boat was lowered, in which Lieutenant Vernon promptly volunteered his services; and by running out 700 fathoms of whale line the gig was reached, now carried some distance off the land. By this means they were enabled to reach the spit, although they had another narrow escape from being carried out, by the line parting when they were close to it; fortunately, one of the men was sufficiently quick to heave the end amongst a crowd of Esquimaux, drawn to the spot by witnessing the state of our boats; and they hauled them up, where they had to remain for the night, the ice being now too strong to allow us to haul the boats through it, and not sufficiently firm for the people to walk on board. During the night, the ice moved but once a short distance, then set fast; and in the morning we had the satisfaction of receiving our boat's crew on board, after experiencing a degree of anxiety for their safety that is not easily described.

The following days were occupied in sawing a canal towards our winter position, which was much delayed by unexpected movements in the ice, undoing our work when nearly completed; and on the 30th, at 10 P. M., we were tracked up it by about seventy natives, men, women, and children, whose shouts and exclamations of surprise gave animation to the whole scene, and made it one of deep interest.

Our time was now busily occupied in making the usual preparations for passing a winter in this rigorous climate, which we had thus early observed symptoms of. A tem-

porary house was erected close to the ship, to receive our deck-load of provisions to enable us to have them clear, for the crew to take exercise when the state of the weather would not admit of their leaving the ship; and an observatory, for the reception of the magnetical instruments, was constructed from ice alone, which answered the purpose perfectly for eight months.

These arrangements were completed by the 20th of October, when the necessary winter routine was established for an economical expenditure of fuel and provisions, with due attention to order, cleanliness, occupation, and amusement, to lighten as much as possible a time confessed by all as being depressing and monotonous. Many valuable hints on this subject were gained from the works of Captain Parry, in following whose example I considered we could not err: taking advantage of his experience, the masts and yards were kept in their proper places, affording a better mark for seeking the ship from a distance, bearing in mind our being here in expectation of parties falling back upon us for safety; and as the land is very low, and in winter, it may be said, not visible, the ship made a fine object, being discernible in clear weather at the distance of nine miles from every direction.

Deeming it a matter of importance that the "Plover's" position at Point Barrow should be known as far to the eastward as possible, and also wishing to ascertain whether Dease's Inlet would afford shelter for any vessel that might at any future time be desirous of wintering there, I took the earliest opportunity of making a boat excursion to perform this service, and left the ship on the morning of the 21st of September, in the gig, accompanied by Mr. T. A. Hull, second master. Steering off the land into

five fathoms, we passed a good deal of sailing ice, and proceeded E.N.E. over an even bottom of from five to six fathoms with the wind from the S.E.

Changing our course to the southward, we got entangled among a series of sand spits, when, taking to our oars, we steered along the outside of the largest island of the group, which we then supposed to be connected with the mainland about Point Christie; but it was afterwards found to be one of the very low chain of sandy islets running along this coast. As I suspected this was taking us to the eastward of the inlet, I landed to ascend the highest part, to see how much farther it extended, and found a second island running in the same direction. The water being too shoal for hauling the boat up here, we stood out into deeper water, and at length succeeded in hauling the boat up for the night on the second island. During the night a strong breeze sprang up from the N.W., with a temperature of + 30°.

Knowing we had run our distance for Dease's Inlet, I was not a little puzzled to know where we were, as I could scarcely fancy it was possible to lay down this coast without noticing these islands.

On the following morning, our observations being complete and the boat loaded, and now concluding that Dease's Inlet must be looked for to the southward, and first erecting a conspicuous mark on this place of the "Plover's" winter position, we steered for a point of the main just visible S.W. (true).

This proved to be Point Christie, where we landed in time to get the latitude at noon. Its higher part does not exceed ten feet above the level of the sea; and here we erected another large mark. The season now seemed to

be so far advanced that I was in doubt between crossing the inlet and returning to the ship; but, as I considered my object would not be carried out without placing notices on Point Tangent, I determined to cross it, and started with a fine leading wind from the northward. In two hours we reached the eastern shore, which is even more shoal than the western—the water about Point Tangent being so shallow that our boat could not be got within a cable's length of the beach.

Having now found that the greatest depth of water to be obtained by sounding directly across Dease's Inlet was eleven feet only, with its shores extremely shoal, I considered the question settled that no vessel could find winter quarters there; and, after leaving the proper notices, started on our return to the ship. Sludge ice was observed on our return to be forming in all the small bays, the temperature having fallen to + 19°, warning us that the open season was nearly at an end. Passing the night in the same place as the previous one, for the sake of the driftwood, we left the next morning with all haste for the ship, which, with a fine breeze from the northward, we reached by noon. Twelve hours after our return, it was reported to me that the ice was drifting past the ship.

A further examination of Dease's Inlet was afterwards made by Mr. T. A. Hull, second master, in the month of May, in continuation of a survey of this coast from Point Barrow eastward.

The southern shores of this inlet, which had hitherto been left blank on the chart, were now traced. It was found to extend in a S.W. direction for a distance of twenty miles, its breadth at the mouth being eight miles,

and terminating in a shoal bay. The S.E. shore is much higher than the rest, one cliff there being as high as twenty-four feet. Four inconsiderable rivers empty themselves here—two on the eastern, and two on the western shore.

The chain of islands which, commencing at the "Plover's" winter quarters, closely abut on Point Tangent, the western part of which was discovered by Captain Moore, and denominated by him "Plover's Group," has been found to be ten in number (on but two or three of the largest of which is there the slightest sign of vegetation), running in a line almost parallel with that of the coast, or E.S.E. and W.N.W. (true) from Point Barrow to Point Tangent, where they terminate, the only channel between them, of sufficient depth for a ship, being the one by which the "Plover" entered.

From the time of our arrival at winter quarters, situated two miles E.S.E. (true) from the Esquimaux settlements on Point Barrow, called by them Noowook, we found this people, contrary to our preconceived opinion, very troublesome and unfriendly. To such an extent did this feeling exhibit itself, that it would have been prudent to remove from their vicinity (particularly as we had received more than one unmistakable hint to that effect), had circumstances admitted it; but, as we occupied the only spot of deep water to be found on this part of the coast, it became necessary to put up with the evil, hoping that time and a better knowledge of our character would improve their conduct; and I had no doubt our wintering amongst them would eventually be attended with beneficial results. The commencement of our intercourse was attended with many unpleasant circumstances. No single

boat's crew could be at any distance from the ship without being pilfered from in the most daring and barefaced way; and upon every trivial, and often without any, occasion, their knives were drawn upon our men, who, although armed with muskets, had strict orders in no case to make even a show of them, unless obliged by necessity, as I thought recourse to that force was to be avoided when a good feeling in favour of any of our missing countrymen, who may at any future period be in their power, was the object sought. Carrying out these views to the extent of not showing our arms was not appreciated, as they mistook forbearance for timidity; and, at the request of two officers going with a watering party to the village, to carry their guns nominally for the purpose of shooting small birds, the show of them was found to have so good an effect that it was adopted on all future occasions, although we were obliged to cease sending for water after a few turns, there being always some unpleasant display of feeling on their part that was best avoided when possible.

Whilst occurrences such as I have mentioned were taking place daily with our parties away from the ship, the difficulty of dealing with those collected about her was sufficient to employ all the people left on board, exclusive of the pressing duties of the ship, with a small crew, at this season.

About the 15th of September, they appeared to be returning to their winter huts, from their usual summer's excursion along the coast to the eastward, and, as the ship lay in their direct track, we had a visit from all of them, including also the Cape Smyth tribe, being the two most numerous on any part of the coast, numbering together

about five hundred. As many as seven or eight large u-mi-aks arrived daily for eight or nine days, containing their summer tents, families, dogs, and sledges, &c.: they appeared perfect strangers, and looked in amazement at us and the ship. They brought with them a small quantity of fish and venison: with the latter they parted reluctantly, and seemed to prefer begging and stealing (in which they were most unscrupulous) to any kind of exchange.

On the morning of the 17th I was informed that a large u-mi-ak had come alongside, and the crew had forced their way on board. As this was not an uncommon case, I thought nothing of it when I found that Lieut. Vernon was attending on deck. He soon came down to inform me that the chief of the party had a musket, and was very anxious to get gunpowder in exchange for venison. This piece of information I considered the worst I had received, amongst many unpleasant circumstances that I had experienced, feeling that we could not remain amongst them if they had fire-arms.

It will be proper to state here that we have, at a very late period of our stay, identified this chief as the same who followed and annoyed Commander Pullen at Point Berens in 1849, full particulars of which are given in his journal.

As he expressed a wish to see me, I went up, and found a large, powerful, elderly man, with a peculiarly bad expression of countenance. He had a Hudson's Bay musket, with the name of Barnett on the lock; it was a good deal worn, but fit for service. He had a powder horn hanging hunter-fashion under his left arm, but pretended to have neither ball nor shot, for which he was most pressing, and would not dispose of anything except

for ammunition. This, as a matter of course, he was not supplied with. I saluted him with much friendship, made his wife a present, and took him down to my cabin, where I made him a present of tobacco, and satisfied his curiosity about the ship below. Then I took him on deck with the idea that he would go away; but nothing seemed further from his thoughts, as he remained about the decks and slipped down the hatchways on to the lower deck several times—a part of the ship they had not had access to during any period of our stay. During the forenoon several u-mi-aks arrived alongside the ship, discharging their crews in swarms on our deck, so as literally to crowd it for the day. They were allowed every freedom consistent with their known propensity for stealing; but some, bolder than others, were difficult to deal with. One man attempted to force back the after ladder door, and my stopping him brought about a slight scuffle between us. That did not seem to have satisfied him, as he soon afterwards came in contact with the quartermaster of the watch, a quiet but rather short tempered, powerful young man, who, before anybody could interfere, gave him a lesson he will not soon forget; he dealt him fair English blows about the head, each of them sufficient to stun any one except an Esquimaux; but he received them until they had the effect of quite taming him, when he was put over the side in the presence of at least sixty of his countrymen, few of whom offered to interfere, and the remainder looked on with indifference. About noon, when, at my particular desire, three parts of the crowd went away, the remainder were evidently detained by the old chief, whom there was no moving out of the ship without having recourse to force; and this I had no intention of, preferring to wait

until he got tired of his visit, and this seemed unlikely for the present, as he hailed three u-mi-aks full of people to come alongside. I heard the word "tawac" (tobacco) used very often, I supposed as the inducement, and the children I observed had been sent away. It occurred to me they might have thoughts of pillaging the ship; their numbers to ours seeming so overpowering. In order to be prepared for anything of the kind, the men stationed on deck were sent down one at a time to arm themselves with pistols, to be kept out of sight in their breasts, in the event of a simultaneous attack being made with their knives, all being provided with good ones, and adepts in their use. When the men were all armed, I was satisfied to await the result. A silence seemed to prevail, as if they had not decided what to do; and whether they had or had not meditated any mischief, beyond stealing as much as they could, they attempted nothing, and went away as night came on, leaving the old chief with his own boat only. He had continued to range about the ship in the most insolent way; and I think it reasonable to suppose it was only the fear of our fire-arms that kept him from mischief. When left by himself, I was cautious not to urge his going away, as I had done when there were seventy people with him; but letting him choose his own time, he remained until 7 P.M. — a visit of twelve hours. When he was gone, I was so thoroughly tired and provoked, and knowing that every person in the ship must be suffering in the same way, that it became necessary to adopt a different system, the number of small articles stolen during the day, notwithstanding all our vigilance, affording sufficient pretext for the change. All work was stopped the next day, and an efficient arrangement made to allow

only one boat's crew on board at a time; and whatever dissatisfaction it might give, it was necessary to adopt it.

It seems necessary to mention here the difficulty of keeping a numerous tribe of natives out of a vessel like the "Plover," as the ice chocks made a convenient landing-place on the outside, not more than four feet from the water, running the whole length on both sides, where they mounted in all directions, and in some cases, when prevented, they cut at our men's legs with their knives, and in one or two instances cut through box-cloth trousers. Whilst the knives of some were engaged in this way, those of others were busily employed cutting the lead scupper pipes out of the side; the nails of the copper were proof against them, but no part of the side escaped their attempts. From this cause it became necessary to cover all the parts assailable outside with a sheathing of wood, and after the ship was frozen in she was enclosed round with a chain, rove through posts fixed in the ice at the distance of seven yards from the side. This arrangement, although very unpopular, was found most beneficial.

The day succeeding the one last described, the chief was observed sitting on the spit close to the ship, and I was told had hailed the ship as if he wished to be sent for. This I thought too good a joke. He was soon afterwards picked up by his own boat and came alongside, but, to his surprise, was not allowed on board, as so many things had been stolen the previous day. During the time he was standing on the gangway, the crew happened to be cleaning, discharging, and reloading their arms, and examining the two carronades, at which he seemed to stare a good deal and went away. Several u-mi-aks arrived alongside, as usual, during the day; but none of the crews were

allowed on board. Some bartering was carried on, and a few presents made to them; but they seemed to prefer adding to their stock by stealing, to any exchange.

The following morning we had another early visit from the chief, accompanied by some other leading men. They brought, as a peace offering, all the articles stolen from the ship for several days. This I considered very satisfactory, and permitted them to come on board; they remained the whole day, but their conduct was altered very much for the better, particularly the old chief, who was now content to remain on the quarter-deck, to which they were restricted. I think the display of our cleaning arms before the chief on the day previous, led him to imagine we were intent on doing them mischief, and seemed to account for this sudden change in their manner.

The system of keeping them out of the ship except with permission, and then to a very limited number only, being once commenced, it was continued throughout our stay; and although it was very difficult to make them understand the necessity for it, which made it disliked, and was the cause of some ill-feeling towards us, it was impossible, through their numbers and want of honesty, to adopt any other course. At first we endeavoured to explain to them that we wished all to come on board in turn; but so far from entering into this view, those who were admitted and remained the whole day, would invariably be the first alongside on the following morning, and be the most clamorous and least satisfied of those not admitted. These disappointments at not being allowed on board, were retaliated in one or two instances by parties landing and carrying away our driftwood collected in a stack on the spit near the ship; this was found too laborious a revenge

for them, and fire was tried: but, a boat being sent, they pretended it was an accident, and did not repeat it.

On the occasion of our cutting into winter quarters, our men being of necessity much spread about on the ice, and frequently surrounded by three times their number of natives, much caution was necessary to prevent the tools from being stolen, and many slight squabbles took place between our men and theirs in consequence of their playing them tricks and trying to trip them up. On these occasions they always selected those of our people who, from their appearance, were thought least likely to resent their jokes, but in some instances they found they had mistaken their men. Points of this sort were the most difficult for a commanding officer to deal with, as it was not possible for him to prevent the provocation, and, when not resented, the motives were misunderstood.

A more serious affair took place on board the ship; the officer in charge, Mr. Hull, second master, in keeping back a large powerful man that attempted to force his way over the side, had a knife drawn on him by a friend of the other's on board the ship, who immediately called out for the women and children to retire. Mr. Simpson the surgeon was standing near, and very soon produced before the man with the knife one of Colt's revolving pistols, and explained to him the use of its six charges, which had the effect of keeping them very quiet for the remainder of the day. I met the women and children retreating over the ice ahead of the ship, and thought something must have happened, although they told me they were going home to dance. A chief arriving at the same time reassured the retreating party, when we explained to them that if they used knives we must use guns, but otherwise we wished to

be good friends. Similar squabbles took place frequently whilst our men were employed building the storehouse; knives were drawn as usual, and in two instances the women and children were sent away. This was a cause of a good deal of anxiety with me, as our men, being unarmed, were very much at their mercy under such circumstances, and in the event of arming them, more forbearance was necessary than some of them would have been found to possess, from the frequent provocations they had received in return for the usual kindness and good nature that characterise seamen. On giving the subject every consideration, and seeing that it must excite an unpleasant feeling, for our men to have knives pointed at them without a means of defence being at hand, the quartermaster of the watch, and two petty officers of the party working on shore, were armed with pistols, but properly cautioned not to produce them unless under circumstances of necessity, as I hoped the mere knowledge of their having them would be sufficient. Of this we soon had an instance. One of them played off one of their usual practical jokes on one of our men, by kicking him in the back of the knees when carrying a spar, for which he was rewarded with a blow on the face; he then drew his knife, when the corporal of marines coming up, and being known to have a pistol, the offender ran away. These sort of annoyances continued as long as our men had work to do outside of the ship, and when the natives were collected in any numbers; the difference of character displayed by them when so, and the reverse, is worthy of remark. In the former case they are bolder and overbearing, and, when meeting with parties, gather round them and, apparently in a half playful way, commence shoving them about and

feeling their clothes, when, if they fail in getting what they want given to them, they help themselves, and with their knives soon remove any buttons that happen to be bright. This was all done, and the offenders mixed up with the rest, enjoying the thing as a good joke, before our people could look round them. On the contrary, when they are in small numbers, they are not like the same people, but seem quiet, harmless, inoffensive, and obliging; but even while displaying these good qualities, should their numbers become increased, they lose no time in throwing off their assumed humility, to join in any plunder going on.

In landing our provisions, I was particularly careful to point out to the chief and other leading men that nothing was going on shore, the nature of which they could not see, except salt meat, which was really the case, and this I knew they would not eat if it was given them, and on the day that all was landed, and the house locked, I showed them the carronade, pointed at it, and told them it was to keep thieves away, thinking that a show of preparation would have the effect of saving us from any attempt at robbery on their part; but I have every reason to believe that some of those on board at the time were leaders in breaking into it three nights afterwards, when fortunately three small sails (ship's) were the only things they succeeded in taking away. A case of flour contained in tins, belonging to the officers, had been opened; but not found to be tobacco, as anticipated, and not liking to go away empty handed, they had taken the sails. I was quite unprepared for this theft, which was effected in the night, notwithstanding a strict watch had been kept from the ship, and the house was visited every hour, as I had been told, by the officers of the ship acquainted with their

character, they would never attempt anything greater than pilfering small things lying about. This there was no remedy for, except keeping a good look-out. Now they had commenced on a large scale, I had to consider the best mode of checking them before anything of a more serious nature should be attempted.

A slight show of fire-arms, in the way of intimidation in all our former cases, had the effect of restoring the stolen articles, and with a view to the same effect, I had a small brass three-pounder mounted on a sledge, intending to threaten them with a visit if the sails were not returned. By the arrival of a native, who came every morning with dogs' food, we were informed that, during the time of sleep, some people had committed the robbery, showing plainly that the affair was well known at the settlement. Our people had in the meantime tracked them on the snow to within a short distance of it, when the sails had been opened and most probably divided. About 9 A.M. the chief came down, assuming a very determined air, with his musket slung across his shoulders, to offer his assistance, and go with us for the recovery of our sails; but as he proposed leading us to Cape Smyth, where he said they had been taken, and stoutly denied their being at Point Barrow, his services were declined.

I must mention here that this was the common excuse with them, when anything was stolen, they invariably pointed to Cape Smyth, and said the things had been taken there. It became so well understood at last, that no notice was taken of it, particularly in the present instance.

The chief, after some hesitation, came on board, when it was explained to him that we were quite aware where

the sails were, and if they were not restored, I should take the gun (which I showed him mounted) to their settlement to look for them; at the same time I thought the opportunity of having his musket in my power too good a one to be lost, and took possession of it, telling him that when he had brought back everything that had been stolen from us, it would be returned quite safe.

This appeared to place him in a serious difficulty, and after repeating the Cape Smyth story a good many times, he returned to the town, and we went on with our work as usual, intending to wait the result of his interference. In about two hours he came again with some evasive story, that they were going to bring the sails down. He remained outside the ship evidently much disturbed, but not mistrustful; there were also a few others, women and children, and one sledge.

We now observed with our glasses an unusual stir at the settlement. In the first place, some women and children were seen moving across the bay to Cape Smyth; afterwards the men were seen advancing down towards the ship, in three single files, armed with their bows and arrows and quivers. I fancied at this time I saw spears also, but did not observe them afterwards. The leading men were discharging their arrows ahead of them as they advanced, picking them up again as they reached them, which satisfied me their visit was not friendly, and my mind was soon made up to keep them in check at the distance of musket range, by firing over their heads, wishing above all things to avoid taking a life, unless under some urgent necessity. Our small force, forty-one in all, was placed under command of the officers appointed to guard the gangways, poop, and forecastle; and previous

to their getting within range, a blank charge was fired from our eighteen-pounder carronade, and the three-pound brass gun, which had not the effect of dispersing them, as I expected, and when within musket range, we commenced firing over them from the forecastle. This had the effect of dispersing them under shelter of the spit about fifty yards from the ship's bows. At this time one of the chiefs, who had been on board frequently, and treated with every kindness, made a rush down ahead of the ship, followed at first by others; but when he found the balls whistling over his head he dropped on his face to avoid them, running a few paces closer to the ship, threw down his bow and quiver containing seventeen arrows, four of them with barbed iron heads. This man had become very unpopular with the crew from some uncivil acts of his; and I have been able to understand since, that although the order to fire over his head was carried out, this direction was very much infringed upon. A few now extended themselves under cover of the house, but as a constant fire was kept up in that direction, not many attempted to reach it, and a round shot being fired so as to graze it, had the effect of dislodging them. At this time a false alarm was given, that they were breaking down the house and carrying things away. I was on the forecastle, and on hearing the report, ordered the man next me, a marine, to fire at a man then escaping from under cover of it, and from the sudden way he seemed to fall and kick out his legs, I thought he was killed. Immediately afterwards the report was found to be correct, and no more shots were fired at them; and I had the satisfaction to find out that the man fired at (the only instance) was not killed.

As the chief, who had been lying concealed under an ice hummock not far from the ship, and who I suppose now saw no chance of gaining an advantage over us with with his numbers, showed himself and beckoned them back in a most energetic manner, causing a general retreat, and as our mast-head afforded a commanding view, I was glad to find that they were all able to use their legs quite as well going home as they did coming out.

Although this affair would give them a poor idea of us as marksmen, not appreciating our motives, I considered that some of them heard the ball sufficiently close to their ears not to wish for a repetition. Mr. Simpson, the surgeon, counted seventy-one, and allows himself to have overlooked ten; he computes the number at eighty, besides several stragglers, a computation I consider as near as could be obtained.

The chief, with another man, stayed about the ship for some time; but as no compromise short of the immediate return of our stores was contemplated, he was not allowed to remain long. My having his gun was an advantage I could hardly have expected, and as its value to him was far greater than anything they had stolen from us, I was content to wait the result of his interference, in the meantime not allowing any of them within gunshot until everything was returned.

On the following day we had a pacific message, to the effect that they were all asleep that day, but on the next all our things would be brought down. They had not left the spot they had advanced to, when I took a party away from the ship to try the range of the gun in a sledge, and to find how it would answer. I was glad they saw us manœuvring it, and as they still remained after motion-

ing them to go away, a musket was fired wide of them as a hint to be off and report what they had seen, which I hoped would have the effect of quickening their movements, in returning our sails. At 7 A.M. on the following day, the chief, with seven natives and a sledge, brought down the sails,—a maintopmast staysail, and mizen trysail, and a boat's cover, all much worn and of no importance to us; but the act was the same, and required checking, lest other things we might feel the loss of should be stolen also. I was told the party seemed in evident trepidation. The sails had been cut into several pieces, adapted in size for their u-mi-aks' sails, and had been served out amongst the party. This would account for the difficulty the chief had in getting them returned, without having a slight brush for them previously. All the pieces were most ingeniously drawn together by the women, who had been employed the previous day and night about them, which occasioned the day's delay in their being returned. As it was necessary, while we were settling matters, to have a full restitution of everything stolen from the ship and boats since our arrival, a careful inquiry was made to find out every missing article; and as these included almost all the ironwork of the launch, which had been cut almost to pieces, in the most vexatious way, while turned bottom up on the adjacent island, I was the more disposed to push this point. When the full extent was known, the chief was acquainted that everything must be returned previous to his getting his gun, or the natives allowed to come near the ship. He then left and returned next morning with every missing article, when his gun was restored to him, and the natives came about us as usual. I had the curiosity to examine the charge of his gun whilst

it was in our hands, and found it as well loaded with ball as we could have done it ourselves, although he had previously told us he had no ammunition.

I made him a small present of tobacco for his trouble, as I believe he was not a partaker in the robbery, and I gave one of his wives a knife, as she had been very industrious in putting the sails together. He made us understand that he had been obliged to use his knife, as well as his authority, to compel some of the thieves to give up their share of the booty. I was glad to have got the upper hand of them without any further trouble on our part, as, independent of the more important motives before mentioned, our own travelling parties might be seriously inconvenienced from being at variance with them.

Notwithstanding these considerations, it is most necessary for our preservation with such a people, to establish respect from them by a moderate resistance upon any undue encroachment on their part.

Had we not been employed on a service essentially of peace, I should have taken a party up to their settlement in the way of retaliation, on finding they had broken into our store. I am not certain that it would not have been the better plan in the present case, as kindness and forbearance are not understood by them; particularly after being fired upon once or twice without receiving any injury, they are likely to form an erroneous opinion as to the power of fire-arms, many of the present party, including the chief, being the same who followed Commander Pullen so pertinaciously along the Return Reef of Sir John Franklin, when the system of avoiding firing at them was adopted until the last extremity, and with

the same good fortune in not sacrificing any lives. As an instance of their ingratitude, I found many who were engaged in the robbery of the house were of those who had been allowed on board every day, and had received considerable presents with the view of making friends of them in the event of our requiring a kindness in return. Whilst our misunderstanding was unsettled, a further enclosure was marked out to include the ship, house, and observatory. Round this a stout hawser was supported on small triangles, and in no instance during the remainder of our stay was this boundary, which necessity had given us good excuse for establishing, allowed to be infringed upon. A few troublesome characters, such as will be found in all large communities, gave annoyance occasionally for a month or two, by shoving each other purposely inside the boundary, when, finding their tricks provoked hard blows, little more trouble was given in this way.

Our intercourse from this time went on more smoothly, and the Esquimaux, feeling themselves in error, seemed to make many friendly overtures to regain our esteem. Some of these consisted in bringing down their tambourines alongside, and dancing and singing in large numbers. In this they had, in some degree, anticipated my intentions, as the officers were at the same time engaged in printing a notice for the lower deck of a "Native Dance," intended to be given in three days' time, with the view of showing them we bore no ill-will, and wished for a friendly intercourse; and as it was to be the commencement of our winter festivities, and headed "Great Novelty," it had the desired effect of producing amusement amongst the crew.

At 4 P.M., October the 28th, our visitors were admitted,

to the number of seventy. After they were made to seat themselves round the deck, the entertainment commenced by serving each with a little tobacco; then our musical instruments (a violin, cornopeian, drum, and triangle) played a lively air, which caused a general exclamation of wonder and pleasure, most of the party now hearing them for the first time. This was followed by a request for them to dance; and being supplied with a drum, they willingly complied. Our seamen danced in their turn; and in a little time the natives entered fully into the spirit of the amusement, stripping off their skin coats and dancing naked to the waist with the temperature at + 6°, showing the state of excitement they work themselves into, as the male performers shout in a wild triumphant manner, and all the lookers-on join in a chorus and become as much excited as the performers: their appearance makes a scene as savage as can be well imagined. By 10 P.M. the party broke up, all appearing to have had dancing enough; the whole company seemingly pleased with their evening's amusement. When we came to take down a few flags that were hung under the housing for ornament, it was vexing to find several large pieces cut out of them as if in handfuls. The chief and some others remaining appeared sorry, and promised the pieces should be returned, which was faithfully done the next morning.

On the following day I paid a visit to the village, accompanied by Mr. Simpson, the surgeon. We were followed by several idlers from about the ship, who, as we neared the huts, spread the report of our arrival, which soon caused a great crowd to gather round us following to the chief's hut, where we found him on his housetop ready to receive us. The winter huts were now covered with snow;

the chief's stood about five feet above the ground, with a square opening at one end, into which we followed through a low dark passage sloping downwards for five or six yards, when we stood beneath the opening in the floor of the inhabited part of the hut. It is circular in form, just large enough to admit one person at a time. Passing through it, we stood upon a smooth boarded floor, about 16 ft. by 10 ft.; the roof was seven feet high, and in the centre was a small square skylight, covered with transparent whale membrane.

The transition from the daylight and glare to the dark passage was sudden, and in some degree prepared our eyes for taking in at the first glance the appearance within. We were placed in the centre of the hut; the chief, with a wife on each side of him, sat opposite to us. There were four or five young men, and two women with children, lying about the floor, all naked to the waist, the children perfectly so. The first breath of the interior was rather offensive, but we soon got accustomed to it; and as the temperature was already high, being followed by a number of men whom it seemed impossible to accommodate in so small a space, it soon became insufferably hot, when the temperature was easily reduced by cutting a hole through the skylight, which made a very agreeable and necessary change in the air we were breathing.

Our visit seemed to give great satisfaction, and was commenced with a smoke, according to the method of doing everything. For the remainder of the time, about an hour, I endeavoured to find out from them how far the nearest winter settlement of natives was east of this place, with the view of communicating with them

before the severity of the winter set in; but I could not make out anything very clear from them. We have a great difficulty in making them understand that our business is not bartering, as their ideas do not extend beyond that, although, from our constant repetition, they appear to be aware that we are waiting for two ships that have gone far away into the ice. The chief's was the only house we visited; and, returning across the bay to the ship, we were accompanied by a young man and a boy, who talked a great deal more than we could understand; but the former, in explaining to us the sort of tobacco that had been given him on board a ship, twisting his fingers together to describe American twist, or negrohead, led us, in his description of the vessel, to believe it might have been the "Investigator" or "Enterprise," leaving the ice this last season, but we were afraid of giving way to our credulity in supposing it to be either of them. As they willingly accompanied us on board, I was glad to avail myself of Lieutenant Vernon's knowledge of the language to sift their story more thoroughly. He allowed them, most patiently, to describe all they had seen, in their own way, and eventually ascertained that the ship they were on board of had diagonal decks, and an ice-chock larger than the "Plover's." The illuminators in the deck they remarked were square; these are the points that seem to have caught their attention, and were sufficient to show that they had been on board one or other of the ships; but when the captain was described as wearing spectacles, Captain Collinson was identified. The remaining point of importance was, that she was gone to the eastward the summer before last (1851), agreeing with the time the "Enterprise" passed. In the spring

of this year I stood on the point from which she had been boarded, with the native who gave this information. It is Cape Governor Simpson, and forms the western point of Smyth's Bay, distant about forty-five miles to the eastward of Point Barrow. The "Enterprise" seems to have been delayed off it with light winds, but on a breeze springing up she was lost sight of to the eastward. Two u-mi-aks got alongside of her, and the people speak with pleasure of the presents they received; and it is worthy of notice that a particular kind of tobacco, with which we know the "Enterprise" to have been provided, led to a voluntary description of their having boarded a ship, affording more information in a few minutes than all our inquiries of the chiefs and others in several months had done.

After some experience with them, we found more information was obtained by casual observations of their own, brought about by something they might happen to see or have shown them, than by asking direct questions, as it seems difficult to lead their thoughts from the passing events around them.

On the evening of the 5th November, the crew had a little recreation with the immolation of Guy Fawkes; and the natives, being told that he was a "big thief," were at great pains to get an opportunity of expressing individually that they were not thieves, which was very amusing, and seemed as if they expected to be treated similarly. The ceremony concluded with a rocket, on which they retired to a distance in dismay, and were evidently much impressed with the whole proceeding. They were afterwards gratified with a dance on board, which seemed to restore their confidence, and closed the amusements for the day.

As some of the crew had expressed a wish to see the Esquimaux village, and understanding there had been an invitation from one of the chiefs to witness a dance, I gave eight men leave on the afternoon of the 21st of November. All went well with them until one of our party, a quarter-master, who had been obliged to handle one of the natives rather roughly on his attempting to force his way into the observatory, was recognised by his old antagonist, who became furious with passion, and immediately attacked him, but was prevented by others from using his knife. He then endeavoured to get some of our people to his hut, who, seeing he had some weapon concealed in his sleeve, declined, when several of the Esquimaux hustled and tripped up our men, who still had protectors sufficient amongst the crowd to bring them away in safety. One man, the carpenter's mate, who by some means got left by his companions, was seized round the arms by two men, whilst the man who attacked the quarter-master picked his pockets of some tobacco and beads he had taken with him for the kind purpose of distributing amongst them. The chief was very much put out by the affair, and tried to get some of our people to his hut; his great aim being to get gunpowder, I suppose he fancied this display of feeling would not be favourable to his wishes.

After this attempt at a friendly intercourse, we all ceased going to the village for upwards of two months; when, seeing no inclination on the part of the men to renew their visit, I found if we pursued the system of holding back, a valuable opportunity would be lost of acquiring a knowledge of their habits which it would be interesting to become acquainted with; and for this purpose the officers again went occasionally to the settlement, taking care to

go with some influential man, who kept away those inclined to be troublesome.

This was again very soon put a stop to, by our not allowing the man to come to the ship who had behaved so badly when our men were at the huts; and in enforcing this measure we went near to having another affray with them. He had been to the ship several times since the occurrence took place, and on being told, always went away. On the occasion in question, he evidently intended to remain and to get up a disturbance, if possible. The chief, who was on board, seeing this, went outside and tried to get him away, to no avail, and another chief tried also. The title of "chief" given here is merely nominal, as, in a community where every man has to provide for his own wants, the most industrious, bold, and successful hunter becomes, from the property he possesses, of more consideration than those not possessing those qualities; but this does not extend beyond his own boat's crew or hunting party for the time being. Seeing this man was resolved to remain whether we pleased or not, I thought it necessary to have our own way as to who should visit the ships or who not, and as his conduct was well known to his countrymen, and condemned by many of them, his case was a good one to enforce. The great objection to any sort of disturbance was the difficulty of making the well-disposed understand our motives, or the separation of one from the rest as bad; and these cases rarely occurred, except when they were collected in large numbers, which made them imagine they could do as they pleased. While the altercation was going on outside, the natives on board, of whom there were several, began to leave the ship, although most of them had been visitors and declared

friends, without, as it appeared, possessing any confidence in us. I then directed Lieutenant Vernon to go out, and once more tell him to go away. The natives thinking he was the leader of an attacking party, two-thirds of the men, and all the women and children, walked straight away for the village, leaving the bad character in the minority, which he had sufficient tact to discover, and followed the others, when quietness was again restored; and those who had made such a hasty retreat out of the ship were now anxious to return again, but others were chosen in preference, from those who had remained as spectators, and were apparently indifferent. The crew were at dinner at the time; and they were not disturbed, as our state, with regard to arms, is one of constant readiness. The chief afterwards told me very impressively not to go to the village; a privation very little felt personally, but showing the absence of control on the part of the chiefs, when our being at variance with one individual of bad character put an end to friendly communication between us and a whole tribe.

He continued to make us visits at intervals of two or three days; but when, to put a stop to them, on one occasion Lieutenant Vernon had, with great good nature and patience, walked with him a considerable distance from the ship, and left him to return, he followed him back leisurely, when I saw there was no means of dealing with him by kindness, and ordered two marines with muskets, outside on the ice, to prevent his further advance to the ship. On seeing them he seemed to fly into a great state of excitement, and presented his breast to be fired at, when one or two well-disposed individuals took him away, and he did not repeat his visits again for some time; when, being told

by the chiefs that he was now good, I was glad of an opportunity to come to terms with him, seeing that disputes would do us no good, however much we had right on our side; and as I thought we had established our point, of keeping him away, to as great an extent as could be expected with a savage, it was explained to him by one of the chiefs that he was to go away, and when we intended that he should remain, a message would be sent to him. Understanding this, he went away much pleased, and on being sent to in a few days, he came down in his best clothes and behaviour, and was allowed to remain, which put an end to all disputes between us.

During this day, which was fine and clear, with a temperature at 23°, we had eighteen natives on board, and seventy-two were counted outside, or in sight of the ship, making ninety in all, men, women, and children, a number not unfrequent in the depth of winter when they were not engaged hunting. No temperature was too severe to keep them away; with the thermometer at 30° and 40° below zero, they commenced arriving alongside as early as 6 A.M., three and four hours before daylight, and those not admitted on board sat on the snow, laughing and playing about as cheerfully as we should have done in sunshine. A party of six at this time had a narrow escape from being starved on the ice, on which they were adrift for six days. They went out to hunt the white bear, when the floe became detached, and drifted into the open water. They were saved from this perilous situation by the chance of its being again brought in contact with the land floe. Although the weather was very severe, so perfect is their clothing, that the only injury they received was some frost-bites about the face: as they were without food, a

description of their sufferings would be one of thrilling interest, if we could understand their language sufficiently to appreciate it.

A short time afterwards, on a general break up of the ice, one man was carried away and lost. Finding he had left a wife and two children, I sent a message to her to come to the ship, and on making her some useful presents, I endeavoured to have explained to a party assembled that our business here was looking after people who were also in the ice, hoping it would have a tendency to gain their assistance and friendship in favour of any of our parties travelling along the coasts they frequent.

Several stratagems were tried to find out if we were on the look-out at night; small parties, generally two or three women, came alongside, and on being sent away, would make some excuse of going out sealing, or some such pretence, to keep in our neighbourhood, but our watch was always too vigilant for them. One man was caught, in the middle watch, coming out of a tent erected over a theodolite on the ice close to the ship, and was brought on board a prisoner. As he had not been able to steal anything, the case was not strong enough to inflict any punishment on him, and he was permitted to go away the following day at noon, with the promise of a good thrashing if he was caught again. While he was on board, only four or five women and the chief came near us. I was glad to see the latter, as he witnessed our leniency on the occasion; but he seemed indifferent as to whether we had punished him or not. This detection put a stop to their nightly excursions, and left us unmolested.

A few of them from the first showed disinterested partiality to us, which was appreciated, and they were invited to

sleep on board on a few rare occasions. For some time they were nervous about it, but mustered courage enough after a little time. My object in allowing them to do so was to give them confidence, and let them see some more of our habits, which I thought would raise us in their estimation.

In the early part of February we were startled by a native report that a large ship with a great many men was wintering to the southward at Point Hope. A party belonging to Cape Smyth had lately returned from Point Hope (a journey frequently made by them in the winter), and had, it was said, been on board the ship; but knowing it to be an impossibility for a ship to winter there, not much attention was paid to it, beyond thinking there generally exists some grounds for such reports, and when well sifted they can sometimes be traced out. The present report seemed to be a forerunner of a party of natives belonging to Point Hope, who arrived at Point Barrow about this time, and soon afterwards visited the ship. The information received from them was of there being a large ship somewhere to the south with very little men on board; whether we mistook their "little" for few—or most likely it was one of many such stories these people have amongst them from the habit of repeating them one to the other without reference to the date, as in this case, if the story mentioned was traced to its source, it would most likely prove to be some whaler visited by them in the summer.

This circumstance is mentioned to account for the way reports are carried along a great extent of coast by natives meeting for a short time for the purpose of barter, and at considerable distances from their respective settlements, when, as may naturally be supposed, an interchange of

news takes place, and thus becomes extended onwards, subject to such change of version as the repeating tribes are likely to give it, making it necessary to consider their reports well before taking much notice of them, unless accompanied by some token of their authority.

The chief of this party was a pleasing, spirited man, about thirty-five years of age, and was accompanied by his two wives, who were good-looking young women. He had come on a bartering expedition to dispose of some copper kettles, receiving glutton skins in exchange. He recognised Mr. Simpson, the surgeon, as having seen him at Hotham's Inlet, and he was also familiar with the name of Captain Moore and some of the former officers of the ship. He described his journey to us, of which I was anxious to get the particulars. He had slept fifteen times, eight of them on the snow, but he showed no signs of having suffered from cold. He described the sea as being open all along the coast to the southward, but he was not familiar with ships, which I accounted for by the lowness of the land about Point Hope deterring the whalers from closing it, otherwise there are many in that latitude in the summer. He seemed to be a poet, and favoured us with an extempore song of some length, which included the name of the ship and some of our own. He afterwards passed his hand down his stomach several times, expressive of great friendship, and then fixed his forehead against mine, and used it as a fulcrum to rub noses several times, a ceremony not very agreeable in his heated state from singing. A chief of this place was of the party, which made him feel quite at his ease, otherwise they are mistrustful on the first visit. He described his people's barter with the Asiatics of the opposite coast (the Tchuk-chi, or,

as they call it, Tsau-chu) to consist of the martin (sable), fox, wolverine, wolf, and bear-skins, and sometimes whale-oil and fish; for which they get in exchange kettles, tobacco, beads, knives (Russian), and walrus teeth. While he remained he was a welcome and constant visitor. The southern natives are far more agreeable than those to the northward, who have been rarely visited; the officers speak of the former as more grateful and modest, particularly the females, while the latter are thought impudent and ungrateful. On leaving, he sung of the good name he should give the ship on his way down the coast, which will be of benefit to our boats on their expedition to Cape Lisburne.

About the middle of February a great many of the natives removed into the interior to hunt the reindeer, found very numerous on these vast plains, which form the north-western termination of America. As I was curious to see something of the country and their mode of living at this inclement season, I thought my making an excursion to their hunting grounds would show we placed every confidence in them. I accordingly left the ship on the 1st March, accompanied by Mr. Gordon, mate, two seamen, with a native guide, and sledge drawn by six dogs, carrying tents, guns, and provisions. Our route into the interior was S. S. W. (true) across snowy plains, differing little in appearance from the bay ice, except on the approach to a lake, when the rise became more sudden, and being exposed to the sweeping winds, grass was occasionally seen in spots through the snow, offering, with deer of which we saw a great many, the only thing worthy of notice. Three days and a half heavy travelling brought us to an encampment on the bank of a river.

The people had a hole through the ice, which we found to be seven feet thick, and reaching within one of the bottom. Their houses differed from those described by Captain Parry, in being excavated in the snow lodged on the river, the ice of which formed a perfectly even floor. Their position from outside was only observable by seeing the implements of chase belonging to the owners in a group over the top. We found them in no instance wanting in kindness, but their character for begging had not fallen off since leaving Point Barrow. Their mode of killing the reindeer is novel, and such as nature has pointed out. The country is so open that they have no means of approaching the animals under any cover; they therefore dig deep pits in the snowy ravines, selecting places where the surface is even, to cover them lightly over with slabs of snow. The moment the animal puts his feet upon them he is precipitated into the pit, the depth of which is too great for him to leap from.

Having effected my purpose of visiting and going amongst them, I returned to the ship after an absence of seven days. The position of the place by astronomical observations was S. 40, W. 38 miles from the ship.

Nothing further worthy of remark occurred in our intercourse, until I was setting out on a journey along the coast to the eastward, when some of the worst disposed tried to deter a young man from accompanying me as guide by threatening to follow and murder us when we slept, the guide amongst the number, upon whom it appeared to have no effect, beyond his repeating the story and advising that the men should not be allowed into the ship during my absence. This report made it evident that the fact of our force being divided had been talked of,

and I felt sorry our residence amongst them for so long had produced no better feeling, but I considered it necessary to show we were capable of defending ourselves, and travelling when we found it necessary. If this was not established, our position, confined to the ship by a tribe of unarmed savages, would not be very flattering. With these feelings I set out on my journey, well satisfied with the resources of my party, and with the judgment and discretion of the officer (Lieutenant Vernon) in whose charge the "Plover" was left. On my return, after an absence of twenty-five days, I was glad to find everything going on as favourably as possible. The natives were returning from the interior in large numbers, and the day previous, 27th of April, as many as 40 sledges with 93 people crossed the bay to the village, from the hunting grounds.

From this time we procured an abundant supply of venison, the only instance during our stay of our receiving any benefit from our proximity to them. It lasted nearly two months, and had the effect of restoring for a time the health of the crew, previously much debilitated and exposed to scurvy.

The appearance of this disease was attributable to the great inequality in the character of some of the provisions in the older supplies of preserved meats and flour; and it became necessary to discontinue the use of beef altogether, and to increase the issue of the last supply of preserved meats and preserved potatoes.

The season for their whale-fishing was now approaching, and commenced on the 7th of May; the distance to the open water was about four miles W. (true) of Point Barrow. On the 11th, hearing they had caught a whale, I made an excursion to the scene, with the hope of being

in time to see its distribution, but on arriving, the only remains we could discover was about half a pound of blubber, to so good an account do they seem to turn every part of the animal. We found the open water extending E.N.E. and W.S.W. (true), and no bottom with ten fathoms. The ice to the southward seemed open, and I supposed the water was free in that direction to Behring Straits. It would be interesting to be able to conjecture its north-eastward extent, the wind blowing, it may be said, constantly from that quarter; if the ice should happen to be broken, it must clear a large space of water.

This pursuit occupied them until the 21st of June, when most of their "oo-mi-aks" were brought to the land to be prepared for their summer journey to the eastward, previous to which they seem to allow themselves ten days' enjoyment, which is passed in eating, smoking, and dancing; they then commence the work of preparation.

Whilst treating on this subject, it is worthy of being mentioned that the natives state that the whales make their appearance off Point Hope in April and May, when the ice there breaks up into fields, and that most of them have disappeared by the time the ships arrive. About the same time these animals also appear at this place, and are pursued by the natives in their oo-mi-aks, as mentioned before, until June, when few are seen, and in July none in this neighbourhood, and the people believe they retire northward, to return this way in August and September. The masters of whaling vessels have informed me that whales are less abundant in the open water in July and August than in September.

A month previous to this time we received, quite

by accident, some very useful information. Two of the officers, Lieut. Vernon and Mr. Simpson (surgeon), conversing with one of the chiefs more intelligent and communicative than the rest, asked him if he had ever seen any boats like ours along the coast, when he said he had, near the Colville river. Finding that Mr. Simpson, by turning over the leaves of Commander Pullen's journal, was able to describe the occurrence that took place, the man unwittingly gave a detail of the whole affair, which corresponded with the written accounts, even to the wind; by which it appears the chief of this place, with his Hudson's Bay gun,— Barnett, 1843 (vide evidence taken before the Arctic Committee, questions 1384-5-6) is the individual described by Commander Pullen, and he appears to have taken a large number of men with him to follow the boats. The man afterwards seemed very uneasy, and was perhaps thrown off his guard when he told so much, but the officers supposed that he thought if the book told so much, they must also be acquainted with every circumstance by the same means, and that he was doing no harm in acknowledging the facts. He was very anxious from the first to learn the names of Commander Pullen and his companion Lieutenant Hooper (a prevalent habit with them), but he was not told until he had identified them in the most minute way. In further conversations connected with the foregoing circumstance, we were enabled to identify this people as the Western Esquimaux, and the same man traced out for us the different stages of the journey. This point had been of doubt with us; supposing the distance from Point Barrow to Barter Island 240 miles of an exposed coast, it could not be accomplished by them in the short season of open water, as their skin boats,

when deeply laden, are not adapted for a seaway. These difficulties were explained by saying they take the boats away on sledges, a month before the ice breaks up; the exposed parts of the coast and large bays are avoided by an inland navigation through rivers and lakes of which we were ignorant.

The first stage of the journey is the Colville, and occupies ten days, where they meet a friendly tribe of Esquimaux, called Nuna-tag-miutes (supposed by Messrs. Dease and Simpson to be a name for the Russians), but there is no doubt of their being Esquimaux, and wearing the lip ornaments peculiar to them. They confine themselves to the rivers and land from which their name is derived, "Nuna" (land), and have a communication through the rivers of the interior to the coast, about Hotham's Inlet, as our informant told us he had met a woman two successive seasons at the Colville, who had been frequently aboard this ship in Kotzebue Sound in the winter of 1849, and had travelled from there through the interior without having touched upon the intermediate coast.

The journey to the Colville is anticipated by them with much pleasure, particularly this year, as they frequently spoke of telling of the wonders seen on board this ships, in addition to the pleasing thoughts of feasting and dancing they were to enjoy with their friends. From thence a select party extend themselves to Barter Island, the women accompanying them to within a day's journey of meeting the eastern people, when the men advance and conclude their business as expeditiously as possible. They give an amusing account of the mutual distrust that exists between the two parties. The western people never sleep while they are in sight of the eastern, and all bargains seem to be made knife

in hand. The articles and system of bartering appear to be as described by Sir John Franklin, but I think later writers on the subject have supposed that Russian goods find their way to the north coast from posts on the Colville, which we have not been able to verify. This tribe receives Russian (Siberian) articles from the Point Hope people, previously alluded to, which they convey to the eastward and exchange for English knives procured from the Hudson's Bay posts, but there is no intermediate supply from the Russians that we could hear of. The journey east from the Colville takes them ten days, which they describe as being made always against the wind; and the return to Point Barrow from Point Berens occupies little more than two, while they sleep in their boats, and allow them to drift before the wind; this would make it appear that easterly winds must be very prevalent in the early part of August. Mr. Simpson, who has taken much pains to inform himself on the subject, considers the 25th of July the time of their departure from the Colville; this has been further established by the fact of the party who attacked Commander Pullen on the 9th of August at Return Reef, being then on their return from Barter Island. The time of their annual visit never differs probably three days, as we have found them generally as accurate in that way as if they were acquainted with dates. From this information it may be concluded that the Esquimaux make one-third of their summer journeys, by carrying their boats over the ice,—before a ship or her boats become available, which gives them a season so much longer, at a time when the weather is very favourable,—this will have been pointed out to them by necessity, from the shortness of the season of open water,

which, if they confined themselves to, it would limit their excursions to a very short range. Their return for the winter takes place, as we have seen, about the 10th of September, and seems to end their labours for the year.

Two days after receiving the above information, May 20th, a native man was observed outside the ship wearing a small canvass bag with an address written on it,—"To the Chief Trader of the Russian settlement, N. America," — which caused considerable curiosity on our parts, and on making further inquiries he told us he had the paper in his but that was originally in it, on which he was despatched with the promise of a large reward of tobacco if he brought it to the ship. Some hours afterwards he returned with two torn pieces of paper, complaining that his little girl had destroyed the rest; fortunately, the most important part was preserved, which has been enclosed. This information is so far satisfactory, as it shows Commander M'Clure to have been making his passage along shore, which has been further confirmed by natives here, who were on board the "Investigator" at Point Berens or Return Reef, where they describe her to have had an easterly wind with no ice in sight. The "Enterprise," it has been mentioned, was visited the year following not so far to the eastward by eighty miles. From these positions it is reasonable to infer they had not again communicated with the shore to the westward of the Mackenzie, as the natives of this place, who are in yearly communication with the Esquimaux who frequent the mouth of that river, have — to our repeated inquiries as to whether they had heard if the ships had been seen by the other people — answered they have not, or they would have heard of it. It will give some idea of the difficulty

of making the Esquimaux comprehend the meaning of our notions, when it is considered the "Investigator" had an interpreter on board, who will have explained the object of the letter given by Commander M'Clure, and we had been eight months constantly making inquiries for such things, and endeavouring to explain our business here, without the individual charged with the paper knowing what it was for; and if the canvass bag had not been found useful, its contents would never have been known.

In order to impress upon them the value of such things as papers and messages, I gave the man a considerable present of tobacco, very much to his surprise and that of his companions, which had the effect of producing an old American song book, the only article of paper remaining in their possession.

I have now to mention the occurrence of a native man being shot by accident, which at the time caused us considerable trouble and uneasiness, but eventually I have had reason to believe it was viewed by most of the Esquimaux in its true light.

On the morning in question, June 8th, the quartermaster of the watch, David Dunstall, came into my cabin, and informed me he had had a dreadful misfortune, and, to my horror, that he had shot a native alongside the ship, and on hurrying outside I found the man was shot through the head, and must have died instantaneously. The man who had been the cause of the unlooked-for event showed by his manner that it had been an accident, and upon making some further inquiries, I found that several natives had arrived alongside the ship previous to the time they were allowed, and although desired on that account to go away several times, they could not be

induced to do so, and the quarter-master of the watch took out a fowling-piece in his hand, in order to frighten them, and when motioning with it for them to go away, it went off and lodged the contents of the barrel in the back part of the poor man's head. The remainder of the party, five or six, ran away so speedily that there was no means of overtaking them, and the body being left, it became necessary to consider the best means of disposing of it. We soon afterwards removed it to such a distance from the ship that the natives could advance to it without fear of us, and at the same time it gave no pretext for their coming any nearer to the ship. When this had been done, and a large quantity of tobacco left with the body as an intimation of our friendship, all that we could do was to hope that some of our friends amongst them would still have sufficient confidence to come down and give us an opportunity of explaining this affair. In this expectation we were not disappointed, as two of the chief men came to the ship at once, having, before leaving the settlement, exerted their influence to quiet the people in their first outbreak. One of these men, who was remarkable for his intelligence, was made to comprehend the possibility of such an accident; and great pains were taken to show him that the charge was shot intended for birds, not men. When this impression was established, we requested them to go back and explain it to the people. By the time they had arrived at the place where the body had been left, a great many had collected, amongst them the wife and friends of the unfortunate deceased, but who, I was glad to find, had left no children. They sat round, and appeared deeply engaged in conversation for about two hours, listening, as we supposed, to the explanation; then

they seemed to examine the body, and his own deer-skins having been brought down, he was wrapped in them and placed on a sledge, which was drawn by his wife leading and four men, one following, across the bay to the cemetery, near Point Barrow. None of the others accompanied the procession. A few of them came as usual alongside the ship, but as they were for the most part of those known not to be friendly to us, our people were kept on board to avoid any treacherous retaliation. During the day I was gratified to find the wives of the principal chiefs came on board, and expressed their sorrow at the absence of their husbands, who were at the open water looking after whale; but they had been sent for, and were coming on board as soon as they returned. They told us also that all work was stopped for five days, the women not being allowed to sew for that time, which seems to be a general custom on the occasion of any deaths, and remarked that we ought not to have any hammering on board for the same time; and as I was anxious to show every sympathy in our power, the caulkers at work outside were ordered to cease work, and the ensign hoisted half-mast, the meaning of which was explained and understood by them. In the evening one of the chiefs who had been first down after the accident visited us with his wife, and brought the intelligence that a division existed in the camp as to revenging themselves on us, but as the chiefs were unwilling to favour it, it seemed probable nothing of the sort would be attempted.

However, proper precautions were taken to avoid any surprise, particularly as a thick fog at the time of sleep favoured such a design.

On the following day the four chiefs, with their wives,

came on board, when, with the assistance of the officers, the whole affair was again explained, which they seemed to comprehend, and appeared to entertain no fear of going below as usual when asked. We were quite aware of their inability to control individuals, but they have to a certain degree a good deal of sway, and recommended us to make presents to all the people who lived in the same house as the deceased, and cautioned us not to stray away from the neighbourhood of the ship, as the feeling of a great many of them was uncertain. On their leaving they were made presents, and desired to bring the house party to the ship at the expiration of five days, the time they strictly confine themselves to the house, and I believe are seldom intruded upon. They arrived at the ship in due time, numbering as many as ten, accompanied by the chiefs. The widow was young, and seemed in unaffected grief, which the large presents she received did not dissipate; but time and a continual course of kindness on our parts brought her to forget her loss so far that she regretted to me, and I believe in sincerity, the thoughts of the ship going away. Our intercourse from this time, as might be expected, could not be conducted with the same satisfaction it had previously been, although no trouble or inconvenience was spared to do away with their unfavourable impression. The views they entertained of the case very much assisted a reconciliation, as they had no idea of any such thing as a general control existing amongst us; the act was set down as purely an individual one, and the whole fault of it attributed to the man as an act of his own, while they seemed to consider the remainder not in any way concerned in it.

About fourteen days after the occurrence a large

collection of people had assembled at Point Barrow to witness some dancing festival previous to setting out to the eastward.

A party from Cape Smyth afterwards endeavoured to get up an united force to attack the ship, without being able to succeed. However, the chief and a good many of the Point Barrow people wishing to make a merit for which to be rewarded, of their not joining our enemies, I was obliged to tell them I should be very sorry if the people came down with bows to the ship again, but if they did, a good many would be killed. This appears to have put an end to it, as we were next told of the departure of the hostile party, and were not troubled with any more reports of that description.

We now watched with some anxiety the preparations for the departure of the natives, as the time was approaching for the departure of our boats for Cape Lisburne, and their transit over the ice could not be effected without some risk of interruption until the numbers of the natives became decreased, so that we were much pleased to see them in a state of forwardness. On July 4th they commenced leaving, and continued to follow for three successive days. Each party halted to sleep near the ship to have an opportunity of begging from us till the last moment, and as I had prepared some printed papers for them to distribute among the eastern Esquimaux at Barter Island, they were treated with every indulgence; and those entrusted with the printed papers received a present of tobacco, some buttons, prepared in England, bearing information concerning the Arctic search, and some other small trifles to keep them reminded of their charge, which they faithfully promised to pass on. I redeemed a

long-made promise to the chief, giving him some gunpowder. I think it had a good effect, by showing we had no fear of them; and I was fully aware he had a sufficient quantity for mischievous purposes, as his gun, when in our possession, we found well loaded with ball-cartridge.

I accompanied one party a short distance on their journey to see if I could gain any useful hints for our own boats. The "oo-mi-aks" were secured on small sledges, and seemed to be easily drawn by three people. The principal part of their barter (whale-blubber and seal-oil) was carried on small truck-sledges, drawn by the women and dogs, the men seeming to confine themselves to the charge of the boats; but at lanes of water and different passes they mutually assist each other. The rate of travelling whilst moving was expeditious, but they made frequent halts to smoke, and before I left them, although near their place of encampment, they ate a hearty meal.

Between the 4th and 7th of July, as many as twenty-seven to thirty "oo-mi-aks," accompanied by 150 people, passed to the eastward, much to our satisfaction, as it left us with comparatively few to trouble us in our preparations for sending away the boats.

On the 7th I made an excursion across the bay to observe the state of the sea-ice, and walked two miles to the westward in the offing without being able to get a glimpse of open water in any direction from the highest hummock. This made me form the idea of taking the boats over the ice to the southward until we fell in with it.

On the morning of the 9th I left the ship with the gig and whale-boat intended for Cape Lisburne. They were placed on two strong sledges drawn by their own crews and officers, Lieutenant Vernon and Mr. Gordon (mate),

assisted by an auxiliary party of ten, including myself and the carpenter, making up twenty in all. Thirty-four days' provisions for the boats' crews, clothing, ammunition, &c. were carried on two native sledges drawn by dogs, a third conveying provisions for the auxiliary party. Parts of the transit over the ice were attended with difficulty, and the whole was very laborious, requiring the utmost strength of all the parties, assisted at times by natives, and for two days by a strong and favourable breeze, enabling us to make sail on the boats, which lightened the labour very much. Travelling to the southward for three days, the open water appeared within two miles of the beach at what seemed a most eligible place for launching the boats. I walked, accompanied by Lieutenant Vernon, to the open water, but the hummocks intervening seemed to offer too great an obstacle to the transit; however on the following morning, July 12th, as the weather was favourable, I decided to attempt it, and succeeded in launching the boats safely at noon. They soon after shoved off with a favourable breeze, which they held for eight hours only.

On the 15th, whilst calculating on the progress they might have made, a party of people were observed coming down at 8 o'clock in the evening, tracking an "oo-mi-ak," and on making out some of our people amongst them our astonishment was so great we could hardly believe our eyes. I went without loss of time to meet them, not in a very agreeable state of mind; but when I counted the full number of the party I was comparatively easy. It appears that on the night of the 13th, finding the ice closing on them, they managed to get the boats on to the floe, and fancied themselves safe although drifting to the north-

ward. The ice continued to press in towards the land, crushing the floe and piling it up to nearly twenty feet in height; and at length the floe gave way beneath them, and the gig was partly filled with pieces and could not be withdrawn further towards the land. The whaler, a lighter boat, was also stove; and as she could not be brought further, the whole party were obliged to make the best of their way to the shore before the ice should ease off, as it seemed inclined to do, and leave them on detached pieces. Fortunately the danger, so imminent, was of that slow though overwhelming nature that they had time to provide themselves with three days' preserved meats, and their arms and ammunition, with which they were enabled to reach the ship. I have forwarded Lieutenant Vernon's journal, which will show their Lordships how that officer and his companion, Mr. Gordon, acquitted themselves on the occasion; and I have much satisfaction in mentioning the high terms in which he spoke of the conduct of the crews, not a man of whom expressed his opinion until they had decided on deserting the boats, when from their manner he concludes they thought it high time; and he further describes them as obedient, cool, and intrepid from the commencement of the danger until their return on board. The loss of the ship's boats was a heavy misfortune; but when it was considered the whole party had found their way safely to the ship, we were too much rejoiced to give a look of regret after the boats, which could not have been saved.

Two days after the return of the boat party I had serious thoughts of despatching another in a native "oo-miak," to keep our appointment at Cape Lisburne; but on weighing the matter maturely, I gave up the idea, as by

no means in our power could it reach the rendezvous by the appointed time; and as the ship would be obliged to wait for the return of the party, the delay would render it impossible to regain this place as a winter station, in the event of its being so ordered. With these considerations, and a present prospect of an early release, I thought it better not to divide our small force at a time when the services of every one would be required to extricate the ship, and to take the earliest opportunity of going to the south in order to recruit the health of the ship's company.

As early as July 25th we were enabled to swing the ship for local attraction; and the ice having cleared away for a considerable space in our neighbourhood, we moved into the fairway to be ready for the first opening in the offing.

The natives brought us a report this morning that our deserted boats had been seen drifted near the shore at the Sea Horse Islands, and their contents made a prize of by a small party, who succeeded in bringing the gig to the land. On our passage down, beating close along shore, some natives brought the shell of the boat off, exchanging her readily for a native "oo-mi-ak" we had provided ourselves with in the mean time.

In watching the dissolution of the bay ice, we had flattered ourselves this season was fourteen days before the last, which it really was in the thinness of the ice; but from the absence of strong winds it remained stationary, at a time when the sea was open the preceding year. Every day, at this period (the end of July) seemed to effect a marked change in the ice, and on the 30th a perceptible motion to the northward was observed in some

of the heavy hummocks in the offing, and a lane of water sufficient for the ship was found by Mr. Hull (second master) whom I sent to observe the state of the ice to seaward.

In consequence of this report I set out in a boat on the following day to trace its extent, preparatory to moving the ship, and to sound along shore to find how close we could approach in case of necessity. Everything seemed favourable to our purpose, and I fully expected to return in the evening and get under weigh; but on approaching Cape Smyth I had the mortification to find the lane of water terminate so close to the shore that a native "oo-mi-ak" could not have passed. This was one of the disappointments of ice navigation which teaches one patience, and requires to be borne with, in addition to others we are liable to, even under favourable circumstances.

From the 1st to the 6th of August an officer was sent each day to Cape Smyth, to bring the earliest intelligence of any change in our favour; but each day brought the same unwelcome report, that the ice was still close with the shore and no open water to be seen. It seems a strange complaint in these latitudes, but the fineness of the present season was the cause of our detention. During the month of July the wind was registered one day from five to six in force; for four days four; and the remaining twenty-six barely averaged two, proving the extreme of fine weather to be a greater obstacle in moving masses of ice than the reverse state of it.

On the 7th, a fresh breeze from the eastward gave me some hopes of a change in our favour; and on visiting Cape Smyth I observed a narrow lane of water extending

as far as the eye could reach to the southward. On getting on board at eight P.M., we left our anchorage, where we had found shelter for eleven months and four days, seven days later in the season than Captain Parry had been enabled to leave Melville Island. We carried a favourable breeze for eight hours, and had made considerable progress, when the wind shifted to S. W., with thick weather and heavy rain, which made it difficult to avoid coming in contact with the ice, from the narrowness of the channel we had to beat in. A continuation of thick weather and light contrary winds on the following day prevented our making any progress; and in the afternoon, finding we were losing ground, I made fast to a large floe-piece, when we found the drift to be one mile an hour, east, being very nearly in the opposite direction to our course. After a few hours we were enabled to cast off, on a light wind springing up from the northward, and run along shore to the S. W.; but the ice had become gradually closer during the few hours of westerly winds, and we had much difficulty in picking our way during the night, as a thick fog prevailed. On the following morning, August 9th, the outer edge of the land floe in the depth of Peard Bay was found to extend unbroken from the land to a distance of nine miles, and the ice outside seemed t o close to offer us a passage in the desired direction; but as the wind was fresh and favourable, the ship was forced nto open water by ten A. M., having sustained some severe but unavoidable shocks in doing so. I was now anxious to keep close in with the land, in order to stop any boats that might be making their way to Point Barrow in consequence of our failing to reach Cape Lisburne; and at two P. M., in passing the Sea Horse Islands, we got into

three fathoms in endeavouring to close the shore for the purpose of sending a boat to put up a mark, which we were not able to accomplish, as the wind was found to blow rather on shore, and was too strong to admit of the ship lying off and on with safety. I accordingly bore up to run for Cape Lisburne, and on the following day, August 10th, at eleven A.M., communicated with Her Majesty's Ship "Amphitrite," Captain Frederick, from whom I received their Lordships' orders directing me to remain at Point Barrow, but the health of the crew would have prevented my doing so had I received the order previous to leaving; and as there seemed no difficulty in returning during the present season, I repaired in company with the "Amphitrite" to Port Clarence, to await the arrival of the "Rattlesnake," and to obtain the changes found necessary in the crew, with an increased supply of provisions and fuel for another year.

Our return seemed the more necessary as their Lordships' instructions direct provisions to be left in the neighbourhood of Point Barrow, which I had not done, considering at the time I left it was probable I should return. A reference to Sir E. Belcher's instructions relative to the north coast seemed also to make it desirable that the "Plover" should return to the station she was known to occupy by that officer, in the event of any of his parties advancing with the certain hope of succour at Point Barrow.

ROCHFORT MAGUIRE, Commander.
Her Majesty's Ship "Plover."

Port Clarence, 21st August, 1853.

THE END.

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